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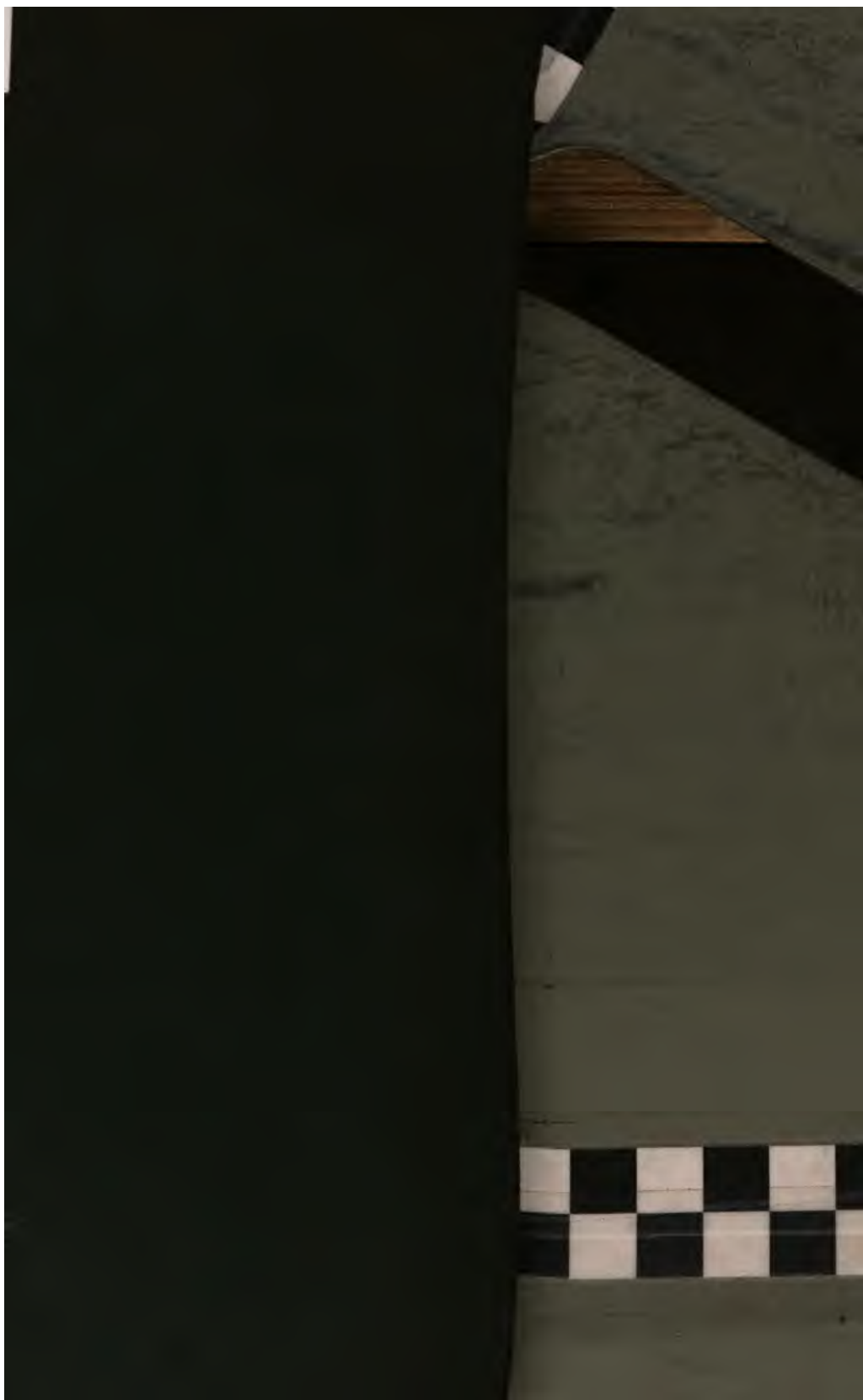
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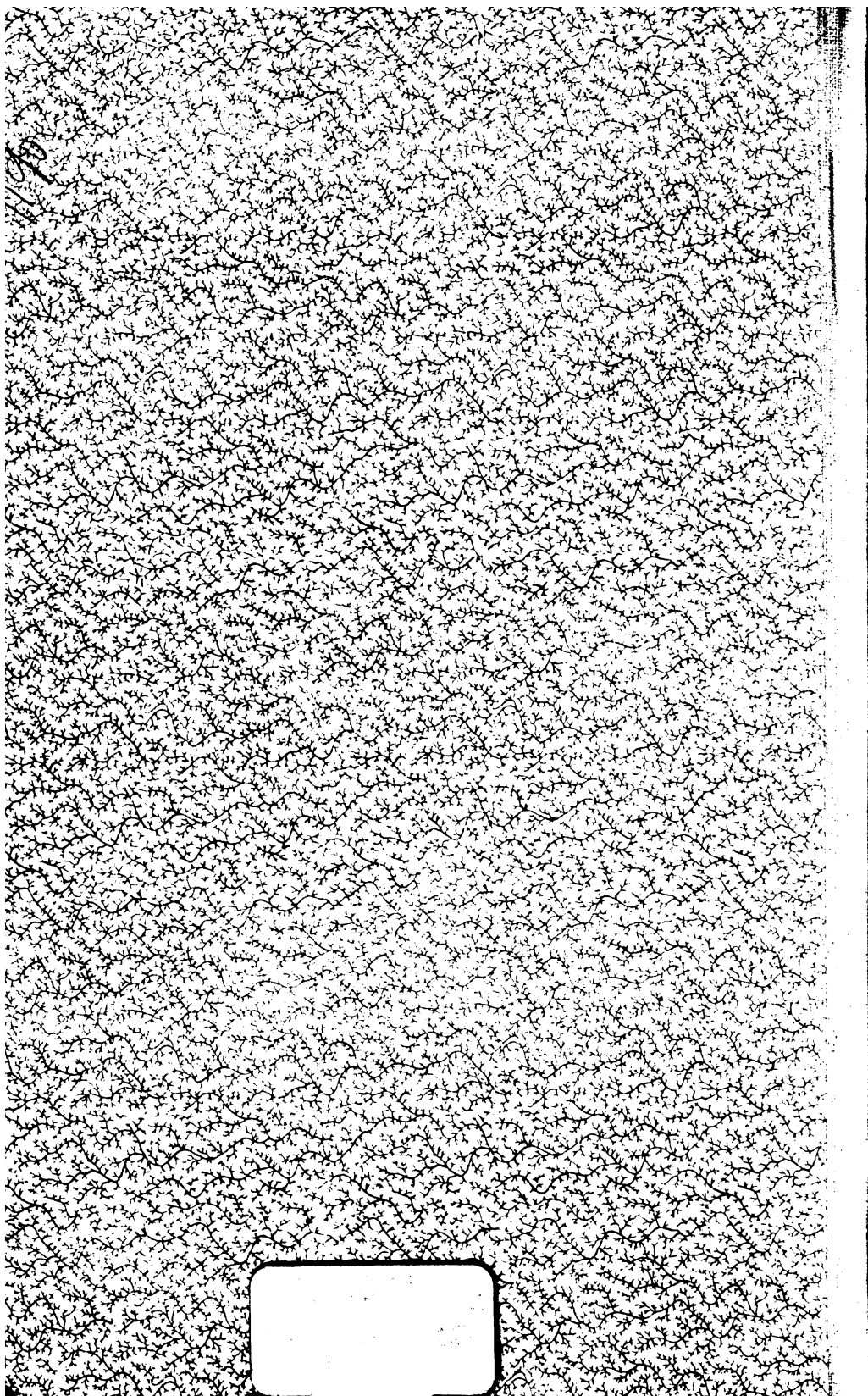
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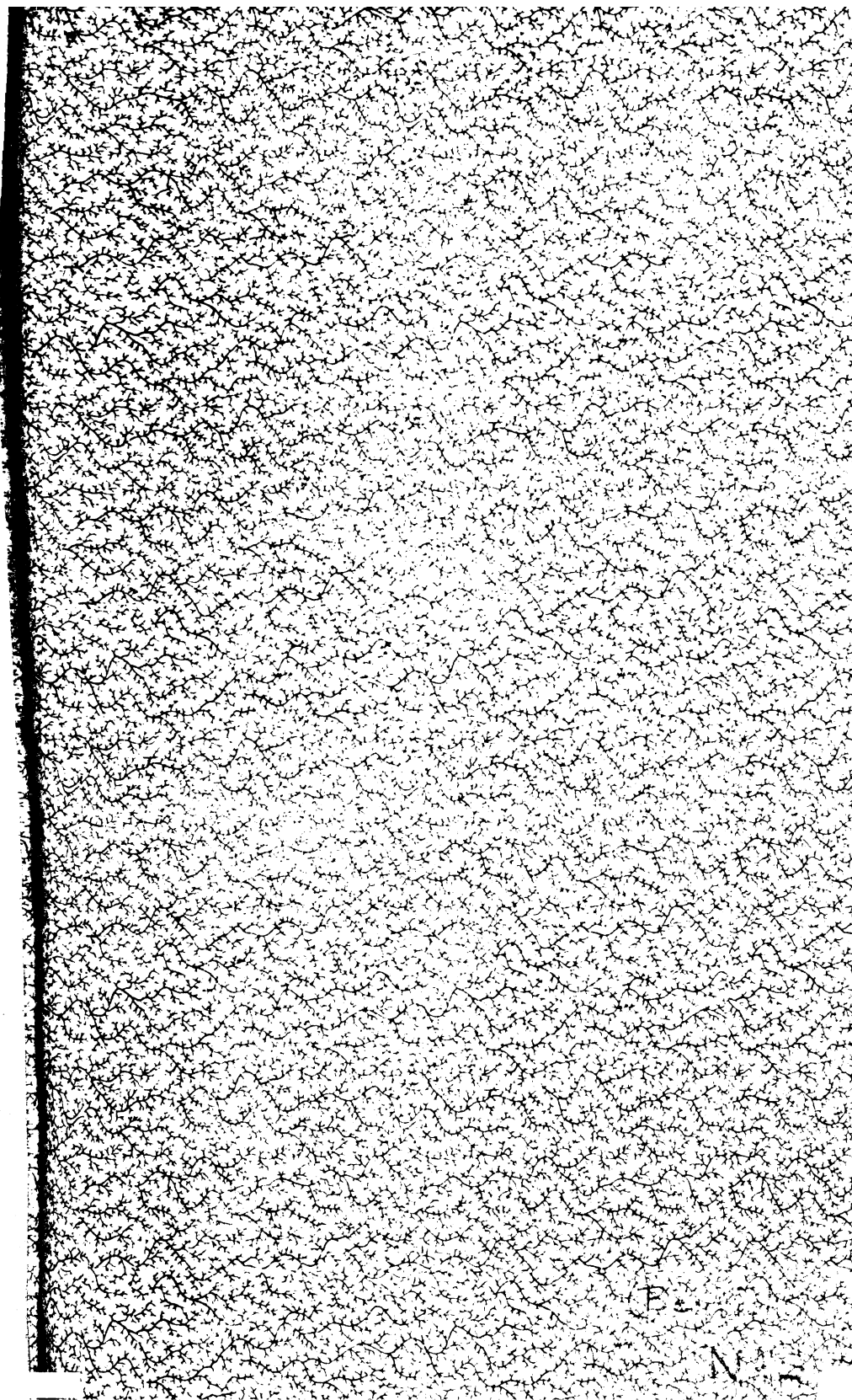
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GRETCHEN'S

JOYS AND SORROWS.

Translated from the German of Clementine (Helm) *Beyrich*

First American from the Eighth German Edition.

BY HELEN M. DUNBAR SLACK.

Earth's noblest thing, a woman perfected.--*Lowell.*

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GRETCHEN'S JOYS AND SORROWS.

I.

THE DEPARTURE.

THE carriage had come. Friedrich cracked the whip, and the brown horses impatiently pawed the ground. Weeping, I once more embraced my father and mother, kissed again all my dear brothers and sisters, and shook hands with the assembled servants; then, sobbing, I drew myself back into the corner of the carriage, but immediately after leaned forward to wave my handkerchief, wet with tears, from the window. Now the carriage passed through the village, and from all the windows and all the doors friendly greetings reached me; for I knew all the dwellers in those peaceful little cottages, having been more or less intimately associated with them during the happy days of my childhood, which I had spent here in my native village. But I was leaving all that had till now been dearest to my heart—my father's house, and the most beautiful spot in the world, this pretty, quiet little village. Near, in the car-

riage, sat a pale, delicate woman of middle age, with gray curls clustering about her forehead, beneath which were two clear, dark eyes. She it was who took me from my home to her quiet house in Berlin. Thither should the young backfischchen accompany her, to learn, under her protection, something of life and the world. That gentle woman was Aunt Ulrike, my father's widowed sister, who was honored and beloved by all who knew her.

She softly stroked my hand, which I, in my pain and grief, had laid in hers, and spoke so tenderly to me that I soon became calm; for by the side of so dear a companion I could not be so forsaken as it had appeared to me.

Soon the carriage approached a wood that extended itself far before us, and I cast a last look back toward my dear village. The church tower and the little cottages all seemed to look kindly at me. I could easily discern the green window shutters on the gable end of our house, and it seemed to me as if a white

cloth was waved from there. I sadly returned the greeting; then the trees jealously concealed from me all farther view, and I abandoned myself to my thoughts, which my aunt seldom interrupted.

After some hours we reached Magdeburg, where we were to take the cars for Berlin. Here I took leave of our old, true coachman, Friedrich, and the two dear, brown horses which I had so often driven myself when we went to the field for grain or hay. I gave Friedrich a thousand, thousand greetings for each one in Schreibersdorf, stroked again and again the horses, gave them once more their dainties, white bread and sugar, stroked tenderly the soft, blue cushions of the dear carriage, and with tears in my eyes, gazed long after the cloud of dust that rose behind it as it rolled away.

A walk that I took with my aunt, in the city and its environs, quite turned me from my sad thoughts; and the journey in the cars through the surrounding country, which was quite new to me, banished them most effectually. My aunt understood very well how to divert me by calling my attention to the objects that we passed; and our traveling companions also frequently engaged my thoughts. After a time my aunt opened a satchel containing all kinds of delicious fruits and cakes that mamma had secretly given her for me; and how clearly its rich contents showed me the dear, careful mother-heart, seeking to make her child happy even at a distance! I swallowed my tears with the dainties, and so was attained the end that my good mother had had in her mind.

At last, with clear eyes, I looked upon the city which now lay spread out before me, and gazed curiously up and down the streets through which we rode. The beautiful houses and brilliant shops

excited my greatest admiration. I saw high statues here and there between the trees, wide bridges spanned the river which flowed through the city, and stately churches and palaces looked proudly and with dignity upon me, poor rustic. All betokened the capital, the residence of a great prince.

Finally we stopped in one of the broad streets before a friendly looking house, that did not reach so high toward heaven as the neighboring buildings, which with their numberless windows quite oppressed my heart. Here in this great city, where such countless numbers of people wished to find room, it was necessary to build high in the air. Large numbers of families lived even in cellars, and no place appeared to be unoccupied. But few occupied my aunt's pretty house, and its neat appearance spoke of comfort and prosperity. At the back was a little, shady garden; and adjoining this, not a street, but other gardens, so that in looking out upon those green trees, one forgot that he was in the tumultuous city.

Here was I now to live for a time, — here in the strange house, the strange city, and among new surroundings. O, how violently my heart beat as I ascended the steps behind Aunt Ulrike and the neat maid-servant who had laden herself with the numerous packages and boxes that I had brought with me! Timidly I stood at the door of the beautiful room that we entered, and did not venture to take off my things. But Aunt Ulrike came to me, and embracing me kindly, said: "Welcome to my house, my dear child. God grant that you may be well and happy here, and that my love may in part compensate for your separation from your family." With what fervency I clung to my dear, dear aunt! O, how alone, how dread-

fully alone, should I have felt in that large, strange city, without that true, motherly friend! But by her side, under her protection, I could cheerfully meet all the new and strange things that awaited me there.

Now my aunt conducted me through her whole house, which, for one person, was very large and spacious. The greatest neatness prevailed everywhere, as well in the rooms as in the kitchen and unoccupied places. All was well arranged. One recognized everywhere comfort and plenty, but nowhere ostentation or modern luxury. All about me gave me the impression of simplicity and solidity, and the whole appearance of the occupant of the rooms was in keeping with them. There was something in my aunt's character that excited my secret admiration, and yet there was nothing at all striking in her manner; on the contrary, all appeared so simple, so natural, that it seemed as if one must always so speak and act. But it was just her distinguishing characteristic; there was nowhere a want, nowhere anything that one could wish otherwise. Then I could not determine for myself wherein that harmony which surrounded her really existed; but now I know that it was due to her good education.

Near that superior woman, I now began to feel more and more how much I, poor country girl, lacked the finer education. At home in the village, in simple circumstances, among my wild little brothers and sisters, these thoughts had never come to me. But my dear mother, on account of many children and much sickness, could not attend more closely to my needs. Her own youth had been spent only in the village; but she had long wished that her eldest daughter might have better advantages than her father's house could offer

her. She had instructed me with care and faithfulness in the quiet, domestic virtues upon which the happiness of her home was founded, and never in my life can I sufficiently thank her for it. Her teachings formed the foundation of all that I learned in after life, and through them my heart and understanding received their early development. But my mother well knew that I could nowhere better receive the additional instruction that I so much needed, than at the hands of Aunt Ulrike, for she herself sincerely honored her excellent, highly educated sister-in-law. Therefore, how willingly did my parents allow me to go to her for a time when she offered to take charge of me.

During the first part of my stay with her I was unspeakably oppressed and unhappy; for in the presence of that highly cultivated woman I felt every moment how wooden I appeared, and my natural bashfulness increased the awkwardness of my behavior. I stood like a stick by her side, and whenever she spoke to me I blushed deeply, and hardly ventured to answer, for I appeared to myself to be so silly and so childish. But the sweet kindness of my aunt soon worked wonders. My timidity melted before it like snow before the sun; and, little by little, I regained my childish cheerfulness, in spite of the blunders that I constantly committed. On the first day of my arrival, my aunt said very kindly to me that she would begin at once to call my attention to those things which she wished me to change; but that I must not become impatient at it, as it was not meant unkindly. Of course I promised this from my full heart, and kept my promise bravely, though it was often difficult enough for me.

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much soap for me. The advancement of a country is indicated by its consumption of soap; the more used, the greater the progress." With that she reached me just such a nice, white sponge as hers, and challenged me to follow her example. I began that unaccustomed work, which I did so skilfully that soon all about me was wet. To make it worse, I upset the water pitcher, and now everything was dripping, the neat washstand as well as the floor and my bed curtains, — yes, even the clothing on my chair.

"Heavens! we shall drown! I call that a consumption of water," laughed my aunt, looking back at me, and saving the still dry things from the flowing water. "You are tremendously improved in consequence of my theory."

"Ah! the great sponge is to blame for it, auntie," said I, weeping quietly, and looking despairingly at the deluge about me.

"All can be learned, child," said she, consolingly. "But dry yourself, or you will pay for my teaching with a severe cold."

"I only wish I were dressed," sighed I. in my heart, as I prepared the water for brushing my teeth and washing my mouth. "This will probably be wrong." But it was better than I had feared. The brush was expensively fine, and the tooth powder had an agreeable odor that helped me wonderfully.

"I hope you will always do that after dinner, child," said my aunt, when I had finished.

"After dinner, auntie? I have never done that."

"Then do it always in future. It is excellent for the preservation of the teeth."

"Certainly, dear aunt."

Ah! how often during that time did

I say, "Certainly, dear aunt." Had I received a dollar each time I should have returned home a millionaire.

"I like to see young girls dress their hair the first thing in the morning," said my aunt, as I was about to tuck my brown hair into my morning cap.

"Certainly, dear aunt," replied I, submissively, and so quickly tore the cap from my head and the braids down that the hair-pins flew all about.

"I will in the meantime read the newspaper to you, Gretchen. Take time, that you may do all well. I prize order highly," continued she, seating herself in an arm-chair; and while she read aloud different things from the newspaper, she glanced continually at me, to see if I did all properly. "Take the hair from the comb before you use it again"; "Do not lay the hair on the table, but in a piece of paper"; "Do not braid so tightly, but quite evenly"; "Clean the comb and brush before you lay them away," and such little instructions, came to me occasionally.

At last that work was finished, and I caught up my morning gown to wrap myself comfortably in it, as had been my custom.

"No, my child; a young girl should dress at once. Do not fall into bad habits," said my aunt; and, astonished, I laid the rejected garment aside. "That is excellent in sickness, but not in health," added she, kindly. "Be always neat. An untidy girl is quite repulsive, and a wrapper tends too much toward untidiness. Come, I will help you, my child."

Thereupon she kindly fastened for me all strings, hooks, and buttons.

"Ah! ah! I see something that does not please me," suddenly sounded behind me; and just then one of the strings of my skirt, that I had tied together yesterday in my hurry, came apart.

"Such things must never happen here, Gretchen," said my aunt, sternly. "And the hooks on your dress are all so loose from top to bottom that they are almost hanging. That will not do. Bring another dress quickly, and sew that skirt string at once."

Like a whipped spaniel, I hastened to the wardrobe and did as I was bidden.

"Did your good mother allow such disorder?" asked my aunt, as I sewed the tape together.

"O, no, auntie, never. She strictly insists upon order," replied I, softly, and almost crying. "I am not always so careless. I was so hurried yesterday that I had no time to make repairs."

"I will give you some good advice, so that this may not often occur, my child," said she, quietly. "Every evening, before you go to bed, examine carefully all the clothing that you intend to wear the next day, and put everything in order. One has always sufficient time for that, and if a little sleep is lost thereby it does not matter much. As one examines his heart and soul before sleeping, and resolves to correct what has been wrong during the day, so should he also put the outer man in order. One should always bear in mind that such little habits bear good fruit, while little neglects soon grow to be large ones, as well in dress as in the heart, and then every reparation requires ten-fold care and labor."

I softly kissed my good aunt's hand with which she stroked my cheek. Then she suddenly made a half-serious, half-roguish face, and looking at my hands, said: "You wear court mourning, Gretchen."

"Court mourning, dear aunt?" What do you mean by that? Is any one of the royal family dead?" I asked, with surprise.

"What! do you not know the meaning of that expression?" asked she, smiling, and held my hands up before my face. "This is called court mourning, child,—your ten black finger nails, for which you have used no brush. Lay the mourning aside quickly. I have furnished the wash stand with the necessary things: go and brush your nails."

"Go and brush your nails!" I went, and made the trial for the first time in my life. At home no one had subjected my fingers to that process. Auntie soon came to my assistance, and I now understood the use of the little brushes and hooks which I found on my washstand. When such pretty, white nails shone at my fingers' ends, my hands themselves looked twice as pretty as ever before.

"Gretchen, slippers are some of those things which a young girl should not tolerate outside of her sleeping room," said my aunt again, casting disapproving glances at my feet; "and it lightens, too, my heart."

"It lightens!" exclaimed I, in astonishment, looking toward the window. My aunt again laughed heartily at this, and asked: "Have you just fallen from the tree, maiden, that you do not understand what that means? The slit in your dress is open: that we call lightening, you little goose; you cannot have pinned it."

"No, auntie; I never do that," I replied.

"But that also belongs to order, child," replied my aunt, pinning my dress. "That carelessness is often noticeable in quite elegant toilets, and is a hateful sight."

While I changed the condemned slippers for close-laced boots, my aunt left our chamber, and I soon followed her to the dining-room, where breakfast awaited us. As I entered the room Aunt Ulrike

came kindly toward me, and taking my head between her hands, imprinted a hearty kiss upon my lips.

"See, I now gladly give you what I refused before," said she, cheerfully. "It is very unpleasant to be kissed by unclean lips; and very many people forget that,—not only my dear little Gretchen. But come to coffee, my little daughter," added she, carrying the neatest little coffee-pot to the table. "To-day it is already made; but in future I shall give up to you the making of it, as also that of the tea in the evening. I like to make it in my room, the humming of the teakettle is so pleasant."

I hastened to fill her cup with coffee, and then to put in the cream and sugar for her.

"First sugar, then cream, else you will be disappointed in love," jested my aunt, watching me. "And do not fill the cups so full that the coffee will run over."

"Ah! pardon me!" I cried, blushing, and quickly poured back into the cup what, in passing it, had been spilled into the saucer. But that was jumping from the frying pan into the fire, as the saying goes, for it was much more improper.

At last I seated myself at the table, and proceeded to make for myself a nice "crumb," as the children called it; that is, I filled my cup with so many pieces of white bread that my coffee was quite thick with it, and the bread was heaped up at the top.

"You are a very methodical child," said my aunt, smiling. "May it taste well to you. When we are alone I will not interfere with your pleasure; but when we are in the company of others you must deny yourself such coffee pudding."

"That is too bad! it tastes so good, auntie," said I, childishly, looking tenderly at my sweet mess. I tried to sip the second cup as Aunt Ulrike did, but, as it was very hot, I turned it into the saucer that it might cool more quickly, and blowing it, raised it to my lips.

"That will not do, either, child," laughed my aunt, and, disheartened, I quickly put my cup down.

"We children have at home always drunk from the saucer," said I, blushing.

"That may be. Children are allowed to do many things; but you are here to learn what is proper for grown persons, and to lay aside children's shoes; therefore I have tormented you without mercy, you poor little backfisch! But we will let it all pass for to-day; do now what you please, or else in the end you will forget all I have told you. To-day I have instructed you in the duties and rules of the morning:—that was lesson number one. I think, if we take such a lesson every day, at the end of a year we shall be greatly improved in those things which a backfischchen has to learn."

In this kind, cheerful way Aunt Ulrike understood how, little by little, to improve the manners of the little, unpolished country girl, which was certainly no small task. The kindness and patience with which she called my attention to all mistakes and omissions made it impossible for me to feel angry or displeased. Whenever she corrected me I was filled with thankfulness toward her who had, with so much love and self-denial, undertaken the charge of my education; and I resolved anew each morning to requite her kindness with an earnest endeavor to do all that she wished.

But how much I had to change, how differently to do everything from what I had ever done it before! It broke over

me like a flood ; for how rich in reproofs and warnings was even this morning alone ! How I longed on that first day for my home ! Ah ! there whatever I did was right ; there I was still a child, permitted to do as I pleased, and how happy and glad I had been ! But now !

Now I was no longer a child : now I was a young lady, with new duties and new claims. Again and again occurred to me the concluding words of that beautiful song, "O happy, O happy, to be still a child."

III.

VISITS.

REMEMBER more distinctly the events of that first morning in the house of my dear "Aunt Deportment," as I jestingly called her, than those of the following days and hours. Still, many, more especially those of the early part of my stay, remain as fresh in my mind as if they had but just happened, and some of them I will now relate.

"Get your hat and shawl, Gretchen ; we will make some calls," said my aunt one day, and I hastened to obey, for I well knew that she did not like to wait for me. I was not at all accustomed to making ceremonious visits. At home I put on only my hat, going in other respects as I went into the garden and fields ; — shawl, gloves, parasol, and their necessary accompaniments, which belonged to a city promenade, I knew little of. So it happened that I invariably forgot some of those things, and noticed it only after we had started,

which of course often put my aunt quite out of humor with me.

That day it had rained, so I very carefully caught up my dress with two pretty clasps that she had given me for that purpose. She had often called my attention to the appearance of well dressed ladies who either allowed their dresses to drag after them in the dirt, or took them up so carelessly as to expose their underclothing, which was not always of the cleanest. "Outside, ah ! underneath, fie !" as she said. Well equipped with shawl and umbrella, I followed my aunt, who was, as usual, ready before me ; but on reaching the door I noticed that I had forgotten my gloves. I ran quickly back to look for the hateful things, and soon caught up with her again ; but, in my hurry, I did not notice how wet the street was, and that I had on thin cloth boots, until she suddenly stopped and pointed to my feet.

"Without overshoes, in such weather, child!" exclaimed she, angrily. "That will not do. In the first place you will get your feet wet, and in the next, you will spoil your boots. Go and get your rubbers, and then come back to me. You will find me at Frau Geheimrathlin Delius', where I shall go first."

With the wings of the wind, I hurried back to the house, and took the forgotten shoes from their box. But how provoking! They were covered with mud, and I must now wait for Dore to clean them.

"Why did I not think of them, and not put the stupid things away dirty!" exclaimed I, angrily, stamping impatiently. "Hurry, Dore," I cried fretfully, or I cannot overtake aunt, and must then enter Frau Delius' parlor alone!" I became quite heated with anxiety at these thoughts, and as quickly as possible ran after auntie, splashing into a thousand puddles, and running into everybody with my open umbrella.

"God help us! what a hurry she is in, the young creature!" I heard behind me, as people turned to look at me. Without stopping I plunged forward in order to overtake aunt before she reached the appointed place, but all in vain; I was too late and must go in alone.

With fast beating heart I followed the servant, and was met by the lady of the house, who welcomed me kindly. Aunt Ulrike was already seated by her on the sofa, but rose, as I entered, to introduce me to her. It was a dreadful moment! I must make a bow! Ah! that was a great stumbling block, and I must have done it awkwardly enough. I felt it in my trembling knees, and in the burning blush that overspread my face.

"Come nearer, dear Gretchen," said the lady kindly, offering me an arm-chair.

"My dear friend, allow her first to carry her umbrella and overshoes into the corridor," said my aunt, as I was about to seat myself.

Frightened, I started up and looked at myself. I now saw in what a plight I, in my haste and embarrassment, had entered the elegant room. I had not only forgotten to put my dress down, that it might cover my skirts, which in the severe storm had become badly spotted, but I had also forgotten to take off my dirty overshoes, which had left large spots on the polished, inlaid floor, as well as on the costly carpet. I also convulsively grasped my umbrella, from the top of which the rain trickled slowly, and collected in a small sea on the floor.

Stammering a hasty excuse, I ran out of the room to set this dreadful blunder right. Looking in the glass I saw how improper my appearance was for a formal morning call. My hair had been blown by the wind in every direction over my forehead, my hat was awry, and had been badly crushed by contact with people's umbrellas, and my collar was just ready to drop off.

"Why will auntie visit in such awful weather!" thought I, angrily, endeavoring to put my dress in some degree of order. While busily engaged with that, my glance fell upon my gloves, the sight of which struck new terror to my heart. Ah! in my haste I had caught up an old pair, and had but just observed it. What would auntie say when she saw them; for see them she certainly would, nothing escaped her eyes. And what would our hostess think of me, before whom I had already so dreadfully disgraced myself! Keep the abominable things on I must, for it was quite impossible to go without gloves, as I did in the country. So I returned, anxious

and fearful, to the parlor, carefully concealing my hands beneath the corners of my shawl, thus giving myself a most stiff and awkward appearance.

Frau Delius had sufficient tact to take little notice of my appearance, and continued to talk earnestly with my aunt; so I quietly seated myself on a simple cane chair, for, without bidding, I could not venture to take the easy chair.

There I sat, silent, for a long time, and had sufficient time to collect myself. I peeped secretly at the fingers of my unlucky gloves, on one of which two, and on the other three of the fingers had burst open, so that the ends of my fingers looked like rosebuds, just bursting from the calyx. But my peeping availed nothing; I could not make them whole again.

At last, having need to use my pocket handkerchief, I put my hand in my pocket for it, and lo! it was not there! In my haste I must have lost it, or left it in the anteroom. That was too disagreeable! How earnestly I wished that auntie would go; but she seemed not to think of that, and still talked on. Soon Frau Delius rose to ring for the servant, and I quickly availed myself of that moment. With an imploring look I nodded to Aunt Ulrike, and snatched her fine handkerchief from her hand, which she indeed permitted, but a disapproving shake of the head told me, only too well, what she thought of her excellent niece.

"Friedrich, tell my daughter that I have visitors," said Frau Delius to the servant as he appeared. Soon the door opened, and a tall, slender lady, in most elegant attire, swept into the room. With a pair of languishing eyes she glanced about her, and greeted my aunt with an easy bow. She appeared not to see me at all, although I stood at my

full height before her, until at last her mother introduced me. Resolved to make up for the miserable bow with which I had greeted her mother, I now bowed before Fraulein Amanda nearly to the floor, and was really quite well satisfied with myself. But she inclined her head hardly perceptibly; then seating herself in the empty easy-chair, she leaned carelessly back in it. That seemed, however, to be hardly comfortable enough, for she drew toward her a small footstool, upon which she rested her feet; and while she leaned her head lightly upon one hand, and with the other waved to and fro an elegant fan, she looked at me long and silently, with half open eyes.

At this examination the cold perspiration started out upon my forehead. I slid uneasily back and forward upon my chair, and at last remained hanging on the extreme edge, dark red to the crown of my head.

"You are probably from the country?" said the young lady at last, in an affected voice.

I blushed again at this simple question. Until now I had always been proud of my home, and my eyes brightened when I could relate something of it to any one; but now I felt almost ashamed that I was only from the country, for I felt very keenly the disdain that lay in that question of Amanda's.

Auntie, who during this time had been talking with Frau Delius, released me from my painful situation by replying in my stead. After a time, during which I again sat dumb,—for how could I venture to address that young lady!—she turned again to me.

"How old are you, dear?" she asked, condescendingly, exactly as a princess might ask a child who begged a favor of her. Heretofore I had quite gladly

and proudly told my age; but in the presence of Amanda Delius I was as another person.

"Just sixteen years," I stammered, once more blushing for shame that I was not older.

"Still a backfischchen," said she, absently, slowly fanning herself.

She certainly told me nothing new. I knew very well that I was only a backfischchen; my aunt and everybody else told me so every day, and the name had never been unpleasant or offensive. But now, from Amanda's lips, it seemed intolerable to me, and I could have cried with anger and vexation. Fortunately auntie now rose to take leave, and I was released from the unpleasant situation in which I found myself, for with those few words the young lady appeared to have done with me. She now either said nothing, or added occasionally a few words to the conversation between her mother and Aunt Ulrike.

Now, thank God! we were at last in the street again. I walked quite silent and ashamed near auntie, who at first spoke not a mortal word. But soon she exclaimed: "Well, Gretchen, to-day you have covered yourself with glory! that I must say!"

"O auntie! I am quite beside myself on account of my stupidities!" cried I, sobbing; for I now quite broke down under it, and thought disconsolately of all that had happened.

"Well, well, child, calm yourself. What will people think to see you, great girl, weep and sob on the street!" said she, consolingly. "You have certainly done nothing wrong, only made some mistakes in etiquette, and you will in time improve in these things."

"Oh! I am a great blockhead, auntie! Only scold me well; I deserve nothing better," said I, still sobbing.

"I shall never scold you for such things, child, for you know no better," replied she, kindly. "But I shall not permit you longer to wet my poor cambric handkerchief with your tears."

In spite of my tears I could not help laughing, and soon became calm again.

"Concerning our visits to my friends," added my aunt kindly, I will only caution you in regard to some things which belong to good deportment. When you seat yourself, whether on a chair or on something else, do not remain hanging on the edge, or on the corner, but sit quietly and firmly upon the whole seat, otherwise you appear awkward and uneasy. Do not hold out your hand until you know that others intend to offer you theirs. Again, I wish to set you right in regard to your bows, which should be in accordance with the age and position of those before whom you make them. To-day the worthy Frau Geheimrathin received a very insignificant one from you, while you made the pretentious daughter one which was deep and solemn enough for a princess."

"But she was as unapproachable as a princess," sighed I.

"In that you are not very wrong," said she, laughing. "That I grant you; but so much the less should I pay her homage. But now come home; we will make the other visits at another time, when the weather is better, and you have a handkerchief in your pocket, and decent gloves on your hands."

Did I not think nothing could escape her eyes! She had indeed discovered the rosebuds, however much I had endeavored to conceal them from her scrutinizing eyes. O Aunt Deportment!



IV.

FRIENDSHIP.

HAPPILY all the visits which I made with auntie were not of so tragical a nature as that of which I have just written, but yet I had a little visit fever whenever we prepared ourselves for similar expeditions. How my heart beat, when, some time after that visit to Frau Delius, I was to accompany auntie to Prof. Dunker's.

"There is a young girl there with whom you can form a friendship," said auntie on the way; still I sighed at the thought, for much as I desired a friend of my own age, the young girls of the capital appeared to be so different from me and my friends in the country, that I entertained strong doubts of ever becoming acquainted with a similarly created being. Those young ladies all stood upon such an unattainable height for me, poor, awkward village child, that I would always have been glad to creep away like a little mouse when I was introduced to them. So, like a chicken covered by auntie's wing, I entered with trembling steps the parlor of Frau Prof. Dunker. A very lively, friendly lady met us with cordial words, and had hardly greeted us before she hastened to the door and called out, "Marie, come quickly; here is a dear visitor."

A young girl with beautiful blonde hair and bright blue eyes appeared, at these words, at the door; and coloring slightly, came somewhat timidly, but

still easily and gracefully into the room. Aunt Ulrike embraced her heartily and then led her to me to introduce us to each other. Those pretty blue eyes of Marie's looked kindly into mine, and taking my hand, she said earnestly, "Oh! I have already heard much of you from Aunt Ulrike, dear Gretchen, and how glad I shall be to become acquainted with you." With that, she conducted me to a little sofa by the window, while the others seated themselves at a distance from us, and talked so heartily and familiarly, so freshly and naturally to me, that my heart beat with joy and pleasure. That was, indeed, another being from Fraulein Amanda Delius, who vouchsafed me scarcely three words, and treated me like a little goose; and also different from the other young ladies whom I had met at auntie's. Near this dear, open-hearted child of nature, my bashfulness vanished, and we were soon chatting and laughing as familiarly with each other as if we had been acquainted for years. As at last auntie took her leave, Marie kissed me tenderly and promised to visit me soon, for she had become quite attached to me.

"Did I not tell you truly that you would become good friends?" asked auntie as we were again on our way. "Little Marie is a very dear, lovely girl, and I shall be very glad if you like each other."

"Ah! she is truly dear and lovely, auntie," cried I enthusiastically, "and I should be happy if I could become her friend."

"That would please me, too, very much," replied my aunt: "for with all her childish simplicity, Marie is a thoroughly cultivated, prudent girl, whose education has been very carefully conducted, and you can learn very much from her."

This new friendship filled my heart with indescribable joy. What I had so ardently wished for I had now obtained, and more fully than I had ever hoped or thought.

The oftener I met the amiable Marie Dunker, the more we became attached to each other, and a bond of friendship was formed between us which to this day remains unbroken.

My friend was older than I, and through her good education had passed beyond the difficult period of girlhood; still she was more attached to younger girls than to those of her own age, and her childish mind resisted all the artifices, affectations and pretensions in which young ladies delight. She was a most lovely little blonde, of fine slender form and elegant carriage, so that I, high-shot-up thing, telegraphing about in the world with my long legs and arms, looked very awkward beside her. She had a wonderfully good, tender heart, that so constantly shone forth from her forget-me-not eyes, that one must become attached to her whether one would or not.

Our bond of friendship was soon most solemnly concluded, with all things appertaining thereto. Of course the first of these was the use of the familiar "thou," but that was understood of itself at our second meeting. Then we wrote the most ardent friendship's greet-

ings in each other's albums. I selected that poem of Geibel's, "O knowest thou, heart, the two angel sisters?" in which friendship and love are so pathetically sung. Marie selected for me Goethe's charming poem, "To Lottchen," which seemed to have been written expressly for us. Then, of course, each soon wore on a cord about the neck a little gold heart, in whose inmost sanctuary a lock of hair of the friend rested; and auntie sealed the bond by presenting to each the most lovely gold ring with a blue stone in it. It is, of course, also understood that the little picture of my friend hung over my work-table, between tender ivy branches, as also mine over hers; and that a thousand neat little notes flew to and fro between us. O how many things we had to say to each other when we did not meet for some days! It was as if there were no end to our questions and narrations.

From this time forth my life was infinitely more pleasant; for although I always gladly talked with my amiable Aunt Ulrike, and her conversation was of very great benefit to me, yet she was so much older than I that it was impossible that our feelings and views could be quite the same. My dear heart's friend felt and thought just as I did; but being better educated and more experienced than I, she always stood by my side with good advice. I was no longer feverishly anxious at heart when I was to go with my aunt to visit her friends and acquaintances; for did I not know that we met my dear Marie almost everywhere, and that in my embarrassment I found in her my support and stay? My eyes flew searchingly through the rooms as soon as I entered a company of strangers; and only when I discovered Marie's dear, blue dress, did

I become glad and courageous at heart; if she failed to appear I felt indescribably forsaken and alone.

Marie almost always wore heavenly blue, and this color was so well suited to her blonde complexion that I very unwillingly saw her otherwise dressed. And now, when I recall that dear season of my youth, I see my friend ever in clear blue before me; she was so truly my blue sky, and her friendly face its golden sun.

Besides our cosy, chatting hours, we spent many more earnest ones together; for Aunt Ulrike wished me to have some instruction in languages, music and drawing, and to my great delight, Marie joined me in some of these studies. So I became also spiritually planed and polished, and soon soul and body were set in emulation with each other. Still, however much people tried to make another little creature of me, my good aunt took care that I should not become spoiled and falsely educated; and fortunately, affectation and pretension have, up to the present time, remained as intolerable to me as they had formerly been. Marie took as little pleasure in them as I did; and that true education did not consist in such things, I saw as clearly in her as in Aunt Ulrike, and considered myself doubly fortunate to be able to live in intercourse with such excellent people.

While auntie in her pleasant way continued to aid me in correcting my faults and mistakes, Marie on her part did the same. One day, for instance, I saw my dear friend coming toward me on the street, and giving my feelings free vent, as usual, I ran toward her, threw my arms around her neck, and hugged and kissed her enthusiastically. Her sweet face became dark red under my caresses; and instead of embracing

me tenderly as was her wont, she quickly and ungently released herself from my arms, at the same time looking anxiously about her.

"What is the matter, Marie?" I asked in astonishment, and looked inquiringly into her usually mild, quiet face; "are you no longer my friend?"

"O Gretchen! do not say that!" replied she, half aloud, and drew me quickly forward with her. "But come, come; I will tell you directly."

Again she looked anxiously to the side, and I now saw a well-dressed young man standing near us, casting mocking glances at us through his eyeglass. I took refuge by Marie, but did not stare less into his face. He smiled familiarly at me, and sneered, at the same time throwing kisses at us. "Heavenly! divine! what charming children!" Marie drew me so quickly away from the vicinity of this impertinent coxcomb, that I could neither think nor see; but after a while, wishing in my anxiety to know whether we were followed, I looked hastily back toward the impudent man. "For God's sake, Gretchen, do not look behind you!" came too late; I had already done it, and saw that our tormentor still gazed tenderly at us from afar, but fortunately had not followed us.

"How could you greet me so boisterously and familiarly on the public street, Gretchen?" asked Marie, with tender reproof. "Never do that again. You see the consequence of it."

"But we always greet each other so, Marie," cried I, beside myself. "What was the matter with the man, that he should insult us so?"

"He dared to do it because you conducted yourself so openly, little heart," replied Marie. "On the street people do not greet each other as at home;

kisses and embraces are improper here. You must learn that, or you will meet with still more disagreeable experiences."

"But it is dreadful that under God's free sky one may not show whom she holds dear!" sighed I, surprised, and hanging my head.

"Yes; what concerns the expression of one's feelings is quite another thing," said Marie, laughing. "We must quite too often place our feelings under restraint when we are among others, and still keep a quiet face, while in our hearts we may be as sad or joyful as we will."

"That is very difficult; I believe I shall never learn it," said I, quite cast down. "But do me the kindness, best Marie, to tell me what is improper on the street. Everything is so different here. At home I needed not to constrain myself; for when I walked about in the village, or ran about in the meadows and fields, all that I did was right and proper, and no one thought differently."

"Well, for instance, do not talk so loudly, dear heart, as you did just now; people all wonder and laugh at us," said Marie, half aloud, pressing my hand. "And then do me the favor not to run and push against everyone we meet, but give way a little to the people."

"Yes, yes; your 'dear heart' is a dreadful stupid," sighed I, and walked in a wide curve around every one who met me. That was wrong again; for that are which I described about the people astonished them quite as much, and I saw clearly that all that excited attention was improper. "You must be dreadfully angry with me, Marie, and are certainly very much ashamed of me," said I, angry with myself and all the world. "I shall disgrace you too much

if I go farther with you; it is better that we should part. Adieu! till we meet again, dear heart."

"Don't be such a little fool, Gretchen," said Marie kindly, holding me back. "That is a pretty friend who cannot willingly bear with the failings of the other. Must you not also endure my faults?"

"Ah! you have no faults at all," cried I, fretfully.

"What! I have no faults, Gretchen?" laughed Marie. "Then I should be a wonderful exception to mankind in general. Thank God, I never experienced that great pleasure. Only see! I will now tell you a fault of your most excellent friend," continued she earnestly, holding out her foot. "Etiquette demands that one shall tightly tie her shoestrings at home, that they may not untie and trail along on the street, as mine does now, and makes it necessary for me to go into a porch to tie it."

Having attended to that little matter, we hastened home. We met some young, well-dressed girls, who, judging from their portfolios, were just coming from school. They were walking beside each other, arm in arm, and took up more than the whole width of the sidewalk. As they came nearer to us they showed little inclination to break the chain to allow us to pass; but Marie stepped so quietly and resolutely forward, that the closely-bound thought it better to make way for us, but tittering, pushed and jostled against us.

"The poor, foolish Gretchen! never behaved so rudely as those silly young persons," cried I, greatly surprised that young ladies of the capital should so conduct themselves.

"Yes; those are fine, school-girl manners," replied Marie, angrily. "The young things know very well that it

not proper to take up the whole walk ; nevertheless they do not care for it. You can have no idea how detestable these school manners among the young ladies often are ; and one who is among them must struggle powerfully against such things. Of course there are exceptions among them, as everywhere ; but I can say this for your consolation, that such a genuine lady of the capital, with her over refinement and vanity, is ten times as bad as you, my dear child of nature, even though you should embrace me every day on the public street, and a whole legion of young fops appeared to witness the sight."

I laughingly embraced Marie, for we had now reached home, and in her cosy little room I was not obliged to consider appearances. We sat there chatting for a long time, till at last the sinking sun warned me to return home. Then I must go ; for was it not also one of the troublesome peculiarities of that large city, that one must not be out alone in the evening ? At home it was most beautiful when evening came. How merrily and safely we went about in the village from house to house ! There one had nothing to fear, more than here in broad daylight, only because people show their feelings to the world. Yes, at home !

V.

DINNER.



S already at breakfast, so of course there were also at dinner many things which I did not do according to rules of etiquette. At home our parents could not attend to all those noisy little children, and quiet was the first and only requisite at table, while in all else we did much as we pleased.

The dinners at auntie's passed quite monotonously, but nevertheless agreeably and cheerfully. She seasoned them with pleasant conversation, which her admonition's interrupted like great exclamation points.

"Use your napkin, child," was for instance one of the commands in my book of etiquette ; "no doubt one wipes his face with his hand where no napkins grow."

That was, to speak plainly, the custom among the peasants. I understood it well, and hastily caught up the heretofore severely-neglected article.

"Only to see what a little gourmand you are !" said Aunt Ulrike again teasingly ; "you sip your soup with the air of a connoisseur, exactly as he tastes his wine. No doubt you wish to find out, by tasting, how many pounds of

beef were used for this soup. And you have made yourself quite comfortable; do your elbows also eat?"

"Oh! the gateway is too small for that large load of hay!" said she at another time when I took so large a mouthful that I had trouble to master it; and as I was about to speak with this stick between my teeth, she interrupted me with, "One should not speak with a full mouth." Then I must neither put my fingers in my plate, nor my knife in my mouth, and I behaved just as improperly with the bones and potato skins, which never would understand that their place was not on the tablecloth, but on the edge of the plate.

"You need not grudge poor Phylax a single fibril of meat, dear Gretchen, and gnaw the bone so thoroughly yourself," was the remark when, having chickens or pigeons to eat, I with youthful appetite unmercifully cracked and gnawed all the bones.

"Papa always said that the best part is on the bones," replied I eagerly. One day as I raised a nice chicken leg to my mouth with my greasy fingers, she said:

"My dear treasure, to-morrow we shall dine at Dunkers', as you know. Be so good as not to take a young hen up in your fingers there. Here with me I will not restrain you, but properly one loosens the meat from the bone with his knife and fork; it is improper to do otherwise."

"Certainly, dear aunt," I replied surprised, for until now I had always eaten poultry with the aid of my fingers.

It was the first time that I had been out to dinner with auntie, for I, poor novice, feared above all things to disgrace myself. Fortunately Marie seated herself next to me, so that I was secure in case of necessity. My other neighbor

was a friendly, portly gentleman, who appeared to me as if his only pleasure consisted in eating and drinking, which was no doubt the case; but the delight with which he tasted and smacked, the indescribably unpleasant manner in which he held to his wide lips just as much as he had placed between them, and lastly the heavy breathing which accompanied this mighty work, robbed me of all desire to eat. How much I thought of what Aunt Ulrike said to me only yesterday,—how unpleasant it was to have an ill-mannered neighbor at table. To-day I learned to understand this thoroughly. To be sure these faults could be more readily overlooked in an old gentleman than in a young girl. There was no doubt of that, and I now for the first time fully realized how much I needed to guard myself against such manners, lest I should cause myself great mortification.

After the soup a strange dish was passed around, of which I had never before eaten. It was a blackish mass, and from its corny figure I supposed it to be preserved berries. Being an intimate friend here, and the portly gentleman near me helping himself most bountifully, I, too, took a good portion, and began to feast.

But how astonished I was when a salty, slimy taste instead of the expected sweet touched my tongue! I was not able to eat a second mouthful, and looked in astonishment at my neighbor, who spread the black corns on a slice of toasted bread, then dropped lemon juice upon them, and ate the whole with the greatest enjoyment.

I was just about to ask Marie what it was when the old gentleman turned, chewing, to me, and smirking and pointing to my plate said with his thick, shining lips, "Excellent caviare! are

you, too, fond of it, my gracious one!"

So that was caviare! Yes, the name of that noble gift of God I knew well; but in person not a single grain thereof had ever strayed so far as our village, and it was therefore wholly unknown to me.

"O no; I—I did not notice when I tasted it," stammered I, coloring, and foolishly concealing my ignorance behind a lie.

"O impossible! only try it again; it is quite excellent I assure you, and I—I understand what is good," continued the portly gentleman eagerly; and though I was thoroughly convinced of the truth of his assertion, yet I declined his challenge, and saw with great amusement the longing glances which he cast upon the dainty that I so decidedly rejected, and from which the servant at last freed me.

Other dishes followed without further embarrassment; but when I asked Marie for the salt, and was about to take it from the salt-cellar with my fingers, as had been my custom, Marie, shocked put it back and said softly, "With the knife, Gretchen!"

Ashamed, I followed her direction, although I was really much surprised. Until now I had always used my five pronged finger-fork, for that purpose.

Now the roast meat came to the table, really chickens as Aunt Ulrike thought. Fortunately I remembered her request, and tried to cut the meat off with my knife instead of laboring at the tender bones with my teeth. But that was only an aggravation; the best remained on the bone, and with true regret I turned from the remains. The preserved fruits that were served with the meat did not disappoint me again; they were sweet and delicate as I liked them, and not unpleasantly salt like the caviare. With a pleasure that almost equalled

that of my epicurean neighbor, I ate those sweet fruits, peaches and plums, anticipating, almost childishly, the pleasure of eating the thick sugar syrup in which they swam about in my glass plate. But unable to eat this syrup with a fork, and no spoon being within my reach, I raised the little plate in order to sip the syrup from it as I had often done at home. It had already reached my lips when I suddenly felt my arm grasped, and with a quick jerk the plate stood again in its place.

"For Heaven's sake! Gretchen, are you mad?" whispered Marie in my ear. "People leave the syrup in the plate."

"In the plate!" cried I unbelieving, and looking at Marie, who still held my arm fast in the fear that I might again attempt to perform the feat. "The nice sugar syrup is to me the best part of the preserve; I need not leave that need I?"

"At home do what you will, but in company it will not do at all. I pray you heed me, Gretchen," whispered Marie quickly, for just then her neighbor addressed her, and she could not attend to me further. There I sat sorrowful, opposite my nice syrup which I dared not eat, and was quite angry from the bottom of my heart at the strange rules of etiquette which obliged me to leave the meat on the bones, and to sacrifice quite the best part of the dinner.

"What would mamma say to such wastefulness," thought I angrily; but just then I was violently startled, and hastily raising myself on my chair, I looked around to see who had shot. My portly old neighbor laughed heartily at my fright, and I soon saw that it was only a champagne cork that had made the noise. But I had heard it so seldom that the sound was quite new to me. And now the wine itself! At home I

had scarcely once tasted it—only when the children were christened—and now a high, full glass of it stood before me, and countless little pearls danced merrily on the top.

The taste of the wine comforted me greatly. The stinging of the tongue, the fire, the sweetness, all contributed to increase the good taste, and I left my glass of ananas-kardinal, which had tasted so good to me, and drank in preference the costly champagne. My stout neighbor understood it far better than I, but he was so much amused at the pleasure I took in drinking it that he filled glass after glass for me. Soon my cheeks glowed and everything sparkled before my eyes; but I took no notice of it until Marie looked anxiously at me and said:

“Are you ill, Gretchen, or what is the matter?”

“I am so confused—everything whirls round,” said I softly, grasping Marie’s hand in order to hold fast to her.

“Have you drunk champagne? It is very strong; take care,” said Marie.

“Yes, three or four glasses. Herr Martini kept filling my glass,” whispered I, and closed my eyes in order to compose myself, for I felt very strangely.

“How could you do such a thing! You had already drunk kardinal,” scolded Marie, giving me a large glass of water that I might more quickly recover myself. I was really clearer and better for it, and was now well on my guard against tasting again the tempting, delicate wine, however so much my neighbor might urge me. It seemed to me that he himself could drink an enormous quantity without becoming dizzy like me, poor novice; for his glass was continually on a journey from the table to his lips and back again. I was heartily glad when the company finally rose from the table to go to the garden where we had coffee. The fresh air soon brought me to myself again, and richer in experience, I wandered happily about in the garden with Marie. To our dear Aunt Ulrike, who soon joined us, I honestly confessed all the crazy acts with which I made my debut at this my first dinner, and which I still distinctly remember.

VI.

SUNDRIES.

EVERY Monday evening some of auntie’s friends came to take tea with her. They generally entertained themselves with conversation, reading aloud, or perhaps card playing. It was my duty on those occasions to

prepare the tea and to serve the little company, since auntie disliked to have servants in the room. That was very pleasant for me after I had become accustomed to it, for house-work always afforded me much pleasure, and

in this way I best escaped the embarrassment of sitting quietly among those old gentlemen and ladies, or even of taking part in the conversation, for which I possessed too little general information. But I could listen to it with delight and yet be able to attend to my work. At first, it is true, there were many things that I needed to learn.

For instance, I filled the cups quite to the edge, which auntie on the first morning forbade; but I could not at all see the propriety of not doing so. It always seemed to me as if people would think I gave to them grudgingly when I poured so little into the cups. The consequence was that the tea was spilled over the edge as soon as the cream and sugar were put in, and that a shower fell from each cup as soon as it was raised to the lips. Again, I carried the tea-pot around the room to fill the cups of the guests, till auntie gently drew me back and brought the cups to the side-board for me to fill them there.

Then if one or another of the guests thanked me and would take nothing more, I considered it my duty to storm them with entreaties till they took some more tea or cake, which was often difficult enough for me. Auntie at last forbade it; "for," said she, "one thanks when one has enough, without expecting to be urged. This begging and entreating may do in small towns, and is perhaps customary in some circles, but it is not in good taste although it is not exactly wrong."

The proper way to pass things must also be learned—that they must be passed on the left, but not on the right of the guests, else they had not the right hand free to help themselves.

Above all, auntie wished me to do all quietly, so that the guests might not

notice the motion of the machinery by which the work was carried on.

"I always feel very uncomfortable when in visiting I see the trouble that my presence sometimes occasions. There are running and calling, doors and closets opened and shut, hurrying to and fro, clicking, blustering and knocking about, perhaps only to get me a piece of cake or serve tea. Never make a noise about anything dear daughter, either in spiritual or worldly matters."

As only old gentlemen and old ladies came on these Mondays, I could quite follow my own inclination to be as polite and attentive, as serviceable and agreeable as possible. With younger persons, especially with young gentlemen, my aunt often held me back in my officiousness because I went too far. That one could be too obliging seemed very strange to me, but auntie understood that far better than I. However, with old ladies she allowed me to do as I pleased; and being strongly attracted toward some of them, my serviceableness knew no bounds. To make them comfortable, to put footstools at their feet and cushions at their backs, to spring for shawl or cloak, to count the stitches of their knitting-work or to take up stitches, to wind silk or yarn, to pare fruit, to run for smelling-bottles or fresh water—all these were things which I took great pleasure in doing, as soon as my watchful eye discovered the lightest wish for them, and friendly thanks were always my reward.

Toward the old gentlemen I was of course more reserved; but whenever it seemed to be desirable, I hastened to bring them comfortable chairs, to pick up whatever they dropped, to pick out their indistinct writing, to wipe spectacle cases, or pleased, quietly to listen when

any long narration found no attentive hearers.

Often when these pleasant evenings were not passed in card-playing, some one of the company read aloud from some good book. I preferred to listen to Aunt Ulrike, whose soft, rich voice sounded like music, and which now for the first time gave me an idea of the pleasure that good reading affords.

However, I had the pleasure of hearing her read; for in order that I might learn something of this art she often took pains to read with me. In the beginning I, poor little bungler, scarcely ventured to open my lips near this finished reader; but in her friendly way she encouraged me in it without becoming weary; often made me repeat line after line, read sentences three or four times after her, till I gave the tone and expression that she herself put into them; and so I improved little by little in my reading.

With this my aunt connected still another thing concerning my education. In order to accustom me to sit properly and quietly with disengaged hands, which was very difficult for me as for many others, she did not allow me to employ myself with any handwork during the reading.

"Young girls never know what to do with their limbs when they have no handwork or cannot dance," said auntie; and how very right she was I knew by my own experience. My position also left much to be desired, and my back always sought the assistance of the chair back. But I believe it needed it because I was such a long-shot-up hop-pole.

"See, I am old but I am much straighter than you, young girl," said my aunt, and she spoke only too truly. She was herself so erect and stately,

without appearing stiff or old-fashioned, that I could not at all reconcile it with her little silver curls, which betokened the feebleness of approaching old age.

"It is only habit, child," she was wont to say when I expressed to her my surprise at this. "Who sits crooked, grows crooked. The tree that as a feeble stem is trained straight, is a magnificent stately tree in age. 'What is bred in the bone will ne'er come out of the flesh.' Who at sixteen sits as my Gretchen now does, with her feet stretched out so far from her, and her hands engaged in gymnastics, will not at sixty years have learned to move easily and gracefully as etiquette requires."

So saying she pushed a footstool under my dangling, sprawling feet, but unfortunately there was no such point of rest for my ten fingers, and it was a difficult matter to let them lie quietly on my lap, as was proper.

"But you must learn," said auntie; "for a young girl who during a conversation holds the fingers still and does not twist something or other in them, is a rare sight. If you only knew, you young girls, how unpleasant it is for others to see your restlessness, you would think more of it and try to avoid it."

"Then, auntie, one must continually think of herself, and of what is proper and becoming," complained I, disheartened.

"That is soon learned, and then one cannot do differently," rejoined auntie. "You will learn it sooner than you think, my dear girl; for I see that you take great pains, and I am very well content with you, although I continually criticise and correct you. Only have patience; it will come, my little daughter."

That was the first praise concerning my deportment which she had ever bestowed upon me. How happy it made me, and how it raised my drooping wings! But that I might not think too much of my great progress, a little damper was held in reserve for me.

We had just now read in Goethe's "Tasso" the beautiful words:

"Would'st thou define exactly what is fitting,
Thou should'st apply, methinks, to noble
women;

For them it most behooveth that in life
Nought should be done unseemly or unfit."

"O auntie! it seems just as if Goethe meant you by that noble woman," said I with youthful warmth.

She looked up from her book, and a merry smile played on her lips.

"You are a little flatterer," said she. "Another verse just occurs to me which suits you excellently."

"Me auntie? A verse? What is it?" I asked in astonishment.

"It is very short, but all the more appropriate," laughed she, and repeated in a singing tone:

"Pussy cat died yesterday,
Ring for her the bells.
Our dear little sweet
Dangles its feet,
Then begins its chair to go,
And gaily wabbles to and fro."

So that was it! Lost in thought I had thrown myself back in my chair, and

rocking to and fro in it, beat time briskly with my feet.

Laughingly I embraced and kissed her for her charming fancy, but so energetically that it was only with difficulty that she could release herself from me. She called me a mad, wild creature, to whom for punishment she would not read another classical word to-day. "Here is other food for the little country girl," said she, reaching for a book which she recommended to me for my solitary little hour after dinner, while she took her afternoon rest.


It was "Uli the Servant," and its sequel, "Uli the Landholder," by Jeremias Gotthelf. Ah yes, that pleased me indescribably; and in this wonderful work must every one find pleasure who possesses mind and heart for simple, deep, brave men. What a treasure in mind did this dear book conceal in itself! What fine observation of pure humanity!

I soon became fully absorbed in the beautiful world into which the poet introduced me,—in the life among plain peasants outside in the village, a world which to me myself was just as dear and familiar,—and I awoke to my present surroundings only when Aunt Ulrike called me to coffee. Alas, alas! I had quite forgotten that in my reading. "First duty, then pleasure," was my aunt's maxim; but the careless girl, Gretchen, did not heed it, else had she first made the coffee and then read.



VII.

SOCIETY.

HE constant intercourse which auntie kept up with all her acquaintances, and the frequent companies into which she introduced me, occasioned me in the beginning great anxiety, and gave rise to many reproofs from my dear Aunt Deportment.

One evening of all others I shall never forget—one that was so rich in events for me that I must relate something of it. It is in its consequences deeply engraved in my life, although at the time it was impossible for me to anticipate it.

We were in a brilliant evening company at President Romer's. I stood as usual near my friend Marie, who was to me here, as everywhere, a friend in need, for I was acquainted with hardly another person in the large company. Tolerably at ease, I looked about the saloon, reviewing the elegant multitude. Suddenly I started. "Ah! Marie, only see! there is Dr. Hausmann from F., who visited papa a short time ago," cried I joyously, pointing with my finger toward a large light-complexioned gentleman who stood in the midst of other guests. "I must speak to him. How surprised he will be to see me here!"

I was about to leave Marie to go to Dr. Hausmann, when I felt my friend's hand fast on my arm.

"Wait, Gretchen," whispered she lightly, drawing me back. "First, do not, for Heaven's sake, point at any one with your finger; that is very improper. Then it really will not do for you to address Dr. Hausmann when he is standing in the midst of other gentlemen, for you must with difficulty force your way through them in order to reach him."

"Ah! that is true; I had not thought of that at all," said I.

"I wonder whether you are so well acquainted with the gentleman that you may address him first. Is he really a good friend of your family?"

"No; I have seen him but once at our house; he came on business with papa, and stayed during the afternoon with us," replied I, somewhat disconcerted; "but being so little acquainted with the people here, I should be so glad to speak with him of Schreibersdorf; that brings him much nearer to me than all the other gentlemen with whom neither my papa nor any one else at home is acquainted."

"I advise you, Gretchen, if you are not better acquainted with him, to wait until he recognizes you. Then you must salute him. Although you are so much interested in him because he is an acquaintance of your friends, yet he perhaps takes no interest in you, or he would probably have spoken to you before."

I must now, as ever, acknowledge that my wise Marie was in the right. Still, it troubled me greatly that to the young man who interested me so much, I did not seem to exist. But my anger did not last long, for soon the circle of gentlemen opened, and my blonde Herr Doctor of Laws came quickly toward me.

"Fraulein Gessler, do I find you here? What a surprise!" exclaimed he joyfully. "I have but this moment noticed you, or I should sooner have hastened to greet you. How do you do?"

Did I not think so! He is glad to see me here among all these strange people, and he could not have spoken to me before, having but just seen me. That was very pleasant to me, and I now joyfully talked with my "dear friend," as Marie teasingly called him, of all the loved ones at home; and he seemed to take so much interest in all that I told him that I quite forgot my surroundings, and with indescribable pleasure and open heart talked with him of everything. After we had talked for a long time I saw Aunt Ulrike's fine figure near me, and she appeared to me to be looking with surprise at her backfischchen. Then it occurred to me that it would be a pleasure for her to become acquainted with Dr. Hausmann; so I rose quickly, saying I would call my aunt. But he rose also, and asked me to conduct him to her instead, that he might introduce himself to her. He smiled so oddly that I felt I had again done something stupid, and blushing deeply, I hastened before him toward Aunt Ulrike, to whom I presented my acquaintance with a few friendly words.

She greeted him in her usual polite manner, but I was far from being con-

tent with his reception, which appeared to me to be quite too cold and reserved. For had I not spoken with him of what concerned me so much—of my parents, brothers and sisters, my dear home, and of our village that lay in the midst of woods and meadows like the pearl in the oyster? All this had brought him so near to me—had brought my heart to my lips and loosened my tongue—and now auntie treated him pleasantly it is true, but still quite as coolly as any other young man who might be introduced to her. That was quite vexatious!

But how great was my asonishment when, the Doctor having left us, auntie turned toward me with a not over-friendly face.

"You were certainly very confiding toward the young man," said she, drawing me with her into a window niche where we should be little observed. "Is Dr. Hausmann so near a friend of your house? I knew nothing at all of it."

"No, auntie, he is not very intimate with my parents," said I, becoming somewhat anxious. "But I was so glad to see him here, where there are so many who are strangers to me."

"And in your joy you have quite forgotten what is proper for a young girl, my little daughter," said she quietly.

"I, auntie!" exclaimed I, truly shocked, for I had not the least idea of it.

"Yes, you my heart! In your earnestness you did not notice how many astonished glances were cast toward you, while you conversed so loudly with the young man that all the surrounding company could hear what you said. Then you laughed so loudly in the meantime, opening your mouth so wide and throwing yourself back in

your chair, that I was quite anxious and uneasy. But the worst of all was your whispering to him as if you were most intimate friends. What in the world ails you, child? You have hitherto been very shy and reserved, but to-day I do not know you at all."

"O auntie! I told him about some of my stupidities, and did not intend that any one else should hear; but I noticed that some of the guests listened to our conversation," said I, quite beside myself with terror.

"So, then, you have already spoken to him of such things? That was certainly placing great confidence in him. Are you so well acquainted with him that you know he does not laugh in his sleeve at you?"

"No, auntie, I can never believe that of him. He was so much interested in all that I told him of my family and home, and he certainly would not have been if he were so bad."

"It naturally appeared so to you, child, for he could not have been so rude as to go away when a young lady gave him such a confidential outpouring of the heart," said auntie smiling.

"But auntie," moaned I, almost crying.

"I cannot help you. You must bear this, severe as it is, that you may become more careful," said my inexorable aunt. "Who knows whether your friend is not now telling another young man what a silly girl this young Fraulein Gessler is, and whether they are not making themselves merry at your expense."

"Auntie, for the sake of all in the world, do not talk so!" I implored, while great tears of anguish and despair rolled down my cheeks.

"Well, we will hope for the best, child; only console yourself," said my

aunt, smoothing back my hair from my hot face. But I must warn you, that you may become more thoughtful and cautious, and not give your feelings still freer vent. Now collect yourself, and through continued good behavior undo what you have already done amiss; and above all wear a quiet, cheerful face, for it is never well to let the features betray the feelings and emotions of the heart, least of all in company. See, here comes your good Marie; she will be better able to console you than I am."

As Marie came toward us my aunt joined an elderly lady, leaving us to open our hearts to each other as we pleased. The quiet window niche concealed us for a while, and I poured all my misery into the heart of my good friend, and received from her comfort and ease of mind for all the foolishness of which I had been guilty.

"Your conduct is certainly astonishing, that I cannot deny," said Marie after my confession, and I would only too gladly have told you that you had talked long enough with Dr. Hausmann. You seemed to have quite forgotten me although I remained near you; but being unacquainted with your friend I could not, uninvited, join in your conversation."

"Ah! do not call him my friend," said I softly. "Who knows whether he is not quite unworthy of that name, and makes sport of me."

"No, I do not believe that," said Marie. "His face expresses much goodness and earnestness; and if he laughs a little in his heart at the little girl who does not know how to behave herself properly, he will certainly not make sport of you, but rather honor your confidence."

"Do you really believe that, Marie?"

I asked joyfully, "Auntie made me quite uneasy."

"I am much mistaken in his face if it is otherwise," said Marie thoughtfully.

"But how dreadfully I have disgraced myself before all the people here! I dare not venture to creep from my corner," sighed I further.

"Bad as it is, it is not so bad as you think," added Marie consolingly. "At the most people only laughed and said you were very young and childish, and after all, all things considered, that is no serious matter. Moreover, by this time people will quite have forgotten the affair. Come freely out again among them, we must not stay here longer. See, here comes Fraulein Meynfeld, who is always very friendly toward me, and I have not yet spoken to her. Adieu, till I see you again. Keep up good courage my rosebud, and don't do so again."

So saying, Marie gaily shook her little blonde head at me, and I soon saw my blue heaven walking about with Fraulein Meynfeld, a pleasant, elderly lady.

Hesitatingly, I once more mingled with the guests, and seated myself somewhat at one side in a room near the saloon where the musicians were just beginning to play. The servants now passed ice cream around, of which I was very fond; so I passed a short time quite pleasantly alone, now listening to the music, now allowing the cream to melt slowly on my tongue, so that it pleasantly cooled my hot blood. I looked about me to see whether I could observe anything among the guests that was not quite in accordance with rules of etiquette; but no; all about me were dignified and reserved; people conversed, but on account of the music, softly; exchanged elegant bows,

and everywhere sat and stood so properly that I turned away sighing.

Soon I noticed a gentleman who stood close beside me. He did not appear to me to be very young, and looked astonishingly anxious and disconcerted. He was evidently unacquainted in the circle, and understood so little how to conceal his bashfulness that I felt the deepest sympathy for him.

At last the music ceased, and the company again buzzed merrily among themselves; only my stranger remained alone. I, too, remained quietly seated, for I was out of humor, and could not master my temper.

After a time I rose to set my plate down, and noticed that my solitary still held his in his hand. He was apparently in great embarrassment on account of it, not knowing what to do with it.

"Ah!" thought I, "you poor man are still more awkward than I, little backfisch." Being obliged to pass near him I embraced the opportunity to speak to him, and to take his plate, and thus relieve him from his embarrassment.

Surprised, he jumped up and stared dumbly in my face. Then recovering himself he bowed rather stiffly. He remained standing, but I seated myself as the music was about to begin again.

Looking at first at my dumb neighbor I believed, as I said, that he was no longer young; but on seeing him nearer I perceived that he was still a young man, and that my mistake had arisen only from his stiff, awkward behavior. I now looked again toward the stranger in order to reconcile the first impression with the last. He turned quickly toward me, and before I could take my glance from him, he looked at me with his dark, peculiarly melancholy eyes, fixedly and silently for a long time.

Somewhat annoyed by this staring, I occupied myself with my gloves which had become unfastened. Looking again at the solitary's face I noticed his resemblance to some one of my acquaintance, but who it was I could not determine. Was it Rev. Mr. Moller in Madgeburg, or Uncle Heinrich in Leipsic? No, no; he resembled more closely Dr. Sarr in Halle, or still more closely Amtmann Amelang, our neighbor in Schreibersdorf. I was still at a loss. It vexed me, as such things will; there was a strong likeness to some one, but to whom strongest? I must solve it,—must once more look at the peculiarly attractive face of the stranger.

I now looked at him, confident that he had taken no notice of me for a long time.

But how astonished I was to find that he still regarded me closely. That was quite unpleasant. What could he find in me to look at? He was altogether too strange. I felt that my face became fiery red from embarrassment—an appearance that had troubled me often enough—but I could not help it. Uneasily I slid about on my chair, and firmly resolved to change my place as soon as the song was ended. But it seemed to have no end; and as my eyes fell before the glance of this strange person, something happened which threw him into still greater embarrassment.

He held his hat under his arm, as all gentlemen do, but so awkwardly that I had already feared he would let it fall, and rightly;—bump! there lay the unlucky hat at last, exactly at my feet! He was greatly confused, and hardly ventured to hold out his hand for it. I stooped involuntarily, picked up the hat, and blushing deeply, returned it to its owner, who received it from my

hand with a stiff bow. At the same time he dropped his gloves which he held in his hand, and before he could bend his stiff back, I again gave him his lost property.

A second time bowing and great embarrassment; then he stood before me not knowing whether to speak or to carry his dumb play still farther. In order to release both him and myself from this painful situation, I took up some pictures that lay upon a table near me, and became seemingly quite absorbed in the examination of the copperplates.

Whether the pictures really excited his interest, or he felt obliged to show me some attention, I do not know. He stood with wide open eyes and neck extended, looking at the pictures as I turned them over, but at such a distance from me that I was obliged to conceal the laughter which his position provoked. To become rid of him I reached him picture after picture, that he might see it without annoying me.

This new attention appeared to break through the dam of his bashfulness. Was I not apparently the only one among the guests who had compassion on him?—under masks, the only sympathizing heart? That he could not resist; it overcame even his bashfulness.

"My gracious miss," stuttered he, "I thank you.—O, I thank you!" Then he asked if I were interested in copperplates; and as I answered in the affirmative, at the same time confessing my entire ignorance of them, he began in a low voice, in order not to disturb the musicians, to talk of the masters, copies of whose works lay before me on the table—Durer, Holbein, Carstens, as well as the celebrated Italians, Raphael and Michael Angelo. At first I was somewhat anxious. I remembered that

auntie had told me to speak only with those gentlemen who were introduced to me, and I was not at all acquainted with this man. But I soon forgot my anxiety in the deep interest which his talk awoke in me. He had evidently great knowledge of works of art; for he was able to tell me in a very attractive way, something of all the masters, as well as of their works.

Now the music ceased, and conversation began again. I began once more to feel anxious, sitting so alone in the corner with the stranger. He did not appear to notice it, and still continued to talk of the pictures. Soon I saw Marie's blue dress near us, and rising hastily I said, "Excuse me, I think some one is looking for me."

But Marie had already reached us. She was greatly surprised to find me in so close conversation with the stranger, and bowing quietly to him she said, "Ah! Herr Baron, do we see you here again? That is pleasant." I whispered hastily to her to introduce him to me, since she was acquainted with him. She looked wonderingly at me, for she naturally supposed that my talkative companion had already done that for himself; but turning kindly toward us again she said, "Dear Gretchen, permit me to introduce to you a friend of my brother's, Baron Senft; and this, Herr Baron, is my dear friend Margarethe Gessler."

All the stiffness and all the awkwardness which had happily disappeared luring our conversation, now returned to my poor solitary in full force. Marie had joined us, and society forms were again demanded of him. He made a terribly awkward bow, and stammered some incoherent words, of which only a few, as "happy — fraulein — kind" —

popped out like frogs' heads from a pool.

We hastened to put an end to his embarrassment, quickly taking our leave and going to another room. But with true sympathy I noticed the sad look with which he followed me, and I could not help it—my good heart impelled me to send back to him one more greeting.

"What in the world does that mean, Grete? You are quite changed to-day," laughed Marie. "First so familiar with Dr. Hausmann, and now quite one heart and soul with the unsocial Baron Senft. If I am not mistaken I have interrupted a very interesting tete-a-tete in which you were engaged with that strange person. You will never again make me believe that you are bashful! The girl who can win Baron Senft truly deserves a medal of merit."

"O be silent with your nonsense! and hear how it all happened," exclaimed I, much annoyed; for to-day I seemed condemned to have the appearance of a foolish, coquettish girl. Hastily I related to my friend how our acquaintance had begun, and that I wished nothing less than to push myself upon that strange person; but that my sympathy for him at last gained me his attention, and thawed the ice-crust of his reserve.

"Well, another than our good Baron might perhaps have interpreted your attentions differently," laughed Marie. "I pray you, for Heaven's sake, keep your officiousness for other people; young gentlemen are never served by young ladies. But you have made a conquest of him; your black eyes have burned him; only see, there he stands in the door, looking quite lovingly at you."

Truly, Marie was right; there he stood, looking so strangely at me with

his large eyes, that I again blushed deeply, and clinging anxiously to Marie's arm, begged earnestly that she would not leave me again, or I should do still more foolish things. Fortunately the company were about to disperse, and I was released from the painful situation

in which my ignorance and inexperience again had placed me. The mischievous Marie whispered roguishly as she bade me good night, "I congratulate you on your conquest; dream sweetly, dear Gretchen."

VIII.

CONSEQUENCES.

THE following morning Marie came early to see how I bore my adventures of the preceding evening. She rallied me so gaily, and was so roguish and unrestrained, that I soon became infected with her merri-ment, and we laughed in emulation over my conquest. We were no doubt very silly and childish; for auntie, who generally freely jested with us, would to-day not enter at all into our gaiety. The night before, after we had retired to our cosy little green room, I frankly told her all; and though she warned me against such indiscretions in future, yet she could not forbear laughing heartily at the story, but finally became grave and meditative, and spoke no more of it.

"Listen, children," said she, as we girls in mad delight laughed and jested near her. "Be not offended with me, but I am not pleased with your behavior. The good Baron has certainly given you cause to laugh, but you do not evince a proper spirit when you consider only the ludicrous side of the matter,—for instance, the part that the poor

Baron played. Do you know so certainly that his interest in Gretchen was so fleeting? whether he, in his solitary condition, was not really deeply pleased with the friendliness of so young a girl? It is hard to stand so alone, and he deserves sympathy, not derision."

"But dear, good auntie, we were laughing at Gretchen's naivete and what was connected with that, not at the Baron," said Marie, becoming earnest. "And for the consequences of his exclusiveness he alone is to blame. Why does he isolate himself so intentionally? He has everything that heart can wish, and through which he might make others happy—riches, an old, esteemed name—independent position—and yet he lives like a hermit, sees and visits almost no one, seldom invit anyone to his home; and whenever he ventures forth from his hermitage he appears so shy and unhappy that no one ventures near him. His old friend cannot do anything with him, as Eduard tells me. He is past all help—is quit too eccentric."

"But for all that he is still to be

pitied," said auntie softly; "for notwithstanding his earthly possessions, he lacks true happiness. He does not understand life, or how to make himself useful to others, and such men always excite my sympathy."

"Well, we will laugh no more at him, auntie," said I kissing her hand. "It was very childish in me and doubly wrong, for he really well instructed and entertained me last night. He is certainly a very cultivated man who lacks only the outward form; and I, simple country girl, should be the last to laugh at him."

At this moment Dr. Hausmann was announced. My face became deeply flushed at the sound of his name, for my improper behavior of the preceding evening arose in all its magnitude before my mind. So much the more was I surprised at auntie's glad exclamation "Oh! I am so glad!" for I thought it would be unpleasant for her to meet again the man before whom I had behaved so childishly. But auntie was often quite incomprehensible.

She met the Doctor in her usual cordial manner, and he greeted her as well as Marie and myself so frankly and amiably, and still so earnestly, that my shyness abated much, for he would certainly not so have deported himself if he had laughed at me in his heart, or had at all abused my confidence. Much quieted I soon gained courage to take part in the conversation, in order to obliterate, if possible, what I had so stupidly done yesterday; and really it seemed as if to-day were my good day, for I talked almost as understandingly as a grown person. But my good aunt knew so well how to introduce subjects with which I was familiar, and the Doctor had such a pleasant way of entering into all, that the visit passed

very pleasantly, and I felt quite happy and composed.

"Well, Gretchen, I think Dr. Hausmann is better than I told you yesterday," said auntie after our visitor had left us.

"Certainly, auntie, I said so at once. But why do you think differently of him now?"

"Because, otherwise he would not have hastened to call upon us. Indifference, or a sense of guilt would certainly have kept him away. But his visit to-day shows me that he has quite delicately and justly estimated your confidence, and that pleases me very much in him. He is a young man of cultivation and fine feeling, whom I would like to see here often."

Auntie's opinion, which was seldom freely expressed to me, rejoiced me greatly; for now I need not be anxious in regard to my behavior of last evening. The Doctor did not laugh at me, and that was the principal consideration with me; for other people had certainly something else to do than to think more of me, poor backfischchen, and laugh at my stupidity.

Marie on her side was triumphant, not having erred in regard to my friend's face, of whom she yesterday had so good an opinion. Put in great good humor, we parted with glad hearts from each other when Marie prepared to go home.

On that day auntie commissioned me to make some purchases, and I prepared to go out immediately after dinner, while she went to visit an old friend. But I was delayed by visits from some young girls, so it was somewhat late before I could go on my errand. At last my business was ended, and I prepared to go home. The lamps were already lighted in the shops and

in the streets, and full of admiration I passed brilliantly lighted show windows, in which by the glare of so many lights, all seemed doubly rich and costly. I, simple country girl, was enchanted with all that I saw here in the large city, and I gladly remained standing before the windows of the shops in order to examine everything more closely.

I especially admired the pictures placed in the windows, and would like to have stood for hours to gaze upon those works of art. In one such shop I saw in passing some of those pictures which the evening before I had examined with Baron Senft, and of whose great worth I, through him, had become informed. Full of interest, I stepped up to that brilliantly lighted window and studied those works of art once more, as also the rich collection of other representations which lay near them. Deeply absorbed in the contemplation of those things, I did not notice that a young man had been watching me for some time, till he came near and very rudely peeped under my hat. I was frightened and stepped quickly aside, hoping the impudent person would go away; but did not know that my stopping at the shop window, especially in the evening, was quite improper, and that it was the occasion of the young man's obtrusiveness. At last he addressed me with quite a succession of empty words, and I now became greatly alarmed. I ran quickly down the street in order to escape from him, but noticed that he followed me closely, and he constantly addressed me in most insulting language. I had still a long distance to go, and in my haste and ignorance of the streets I missed my way, and soon knew not which way to turn. That a hackney-coach could be of any use to me in my extremity did not, in

my anxiety, occur to me. I realized only that my pursuer was near me, and rushed forward, for I feared every moment that he would seize me, since he drew ever nearer.

The cold perspiration stood on my forehead, and the tears in my eyes. I was just about to enter a shop to seek help and protection when I saw a familiar face approaching me, Baron Senft, my new friend of last evening. Joyfully I ran toward him, and grasping his hand like a child, said quickly, "O Herr Baron, please protect and accompany me home; I have lost my way."

The Baron looked at me in astonishment, for I trembled with anxiety and agitation, but immediately took my arm, and casting a quick glance at the young man who slowly drew back, said, "With pleasure, gracious fraulein; do not fear, I will protect you."

It now first occurred to me how strange my conduct toward the Baron was; but he could not think wrongly of me, for he saw in what an unpleasant situation I found myself when I asked his protection, and of course I now related to him exactly how it had all happened. My brave companion expressed his pleasure at being able to be useful to me, and was so kind, so repeatedly assured me how happy the confidence that I placed in him made him, that I became quite glad and well at ease, and sincerely thanked the good man. I looked like a child into his face when I at last reached home. He looked so earnestly at me, with his dark melancholy eyes, that I knew not what to think; but I had become acquainted with him as a strange person, and did not concern myself further about it. He kissed my hand in taking leave—he the stiff, unsociable misanthrope—asked to be allowed to call upon me

another day. That was much more than I had expected of him; and joyfully I hastened to Aunt Ulrike to tell her of my new adventure, and to announce to her the Baron's future visit.

But she was very angry at my imprudence, and sternly forbade me ever again to stand long at the shop windows, which in the day time was improper, but in the evening was not to be thought of, and always to take a carriage as soon as the darkness overtook me. She was also not much pleased at my meeting with the Baron, and I soon felt that I had been inexcusably thoughtless, and quite dejected I seated myself at my sewing.

The next day came the promised visit. Baron Senft was announced. Aunt Ulrike received him in her own pleasant way; but I could see that she was more reserved than usual, and the good Baron being again extremely stiff and embarrassed, the visit was very uncomfortable. I was only too sorry for the poor man. I could well understand his feelings, and so did my utmost, through cordial advances and childish frankness, to place him more at ease.

At last he excused himself, and I was truly glad of it, for Aunt Ulrike was unaccountably cool and reserved. I could not at all reconcile her manner with the kind opinion she had the day before expressed of the Baron, and I now frankly expressed as much to her.

"It was on account of the too great friendliness of my Gretchen—to counteract the effect of it," said auntie earnestly. "I must beg of you my child, by all the unconstrained cordiality with which you endeavored to free the Baron from his embarrassment, to be very much more reserved. You do not know whether such conduct will be regarded as you, in your inexperience, think; and

another construction would be very painful to you."

"Another, auntie? How else could he understand my friendliness?" asked I puzzled.

"For excessive desire to please—coquetry, my child," said she becoming still more earnest.

"Oh! that is impossible! I am very far from that!" cried I excitedly. "What have I done that he should think so of me? No; that would be too unkind in him!"

"I hope above all that we need not fear this of Baron Senft," said she quietly. "But in future you must be reserved, my child; for if he does not think you coquettish, he may think you feel an interest in him which, as I believe, you cannot feel."

"But, dear auntie, how can you say such things!" said I coloring deeply. "You mean he may think I am—ah, auntie!"

The idea was so excessively comical that in spite of auntie's earnestness I could not forbear laughing. I, in love with the Baron! I, poor, young, half-grown girl! And he, this serious, stiff Baron, who seemed to me like an old man in spite of his youth, and whom I had trusted as an inoffensive child! One could imagine nothing more improbable. Auntie had too strange ideas!

As our conversation took this cheerful turn, for Aunt Ulrike herself could not forbear laughing, my heart became lighter; and singing, and cheerful as usual, I went about my daily work. In the afternoon I was gladdened by a visit from Marie, and filled with joy I flew to meet my beloved friend.

"Dearest Marie, how glad I am that you came!" cried I embracing her. "But what is the matter? you appear very strangely," continued I immediately,

and looked inquiringly into her eyes as she looked at me half roguishly, half earnestly.

"Yes, I do not know myself whether to laugh or cry, Gretchen," replied Marie unusually excited. "Tell me what pranks you have been playing now. Did you speak with the Baron again yesterday?"

"The Baron? Yes, certainly; yesterday, and again to-day," said I coloring; for what could Marie's questions mean? "I long to tell you all about it."

"Now it is clearer," said Marie thoughtfully. "But as I know it, it is too unpleasant an affair."

"But what in the world is it, Marie? Speak!" cried I impatiently. "What is the matter, and what do you mean?"

"Come to Auntie Jagow, she too must immediately hear the story," said Marie, going with me to auntie's work-room.

"What is the matter, children?" she asked, discontinuing her work as we entered.

"Marie has become a sphinx and speaks in riddles, auntie," said I smiling. "Perhaps you can understand her; her speech is too high for me, poor child."

"Ah, Aunt Ulrike! it is a fine story!" cried Marie, again half laughing, half crying. "What shall we do now?"

"What then—what is a fine story?" asked my aunt. "You are certainly quite excited. I do not at all recognize you. What has so greatly disturbed you?"

"Nothing more concerning our good Baron?" asked I laughing heartily.

"Yes, yes; laugh you wicked one; it is even he," said Marie irritated.

"The Baron! What has he done now?" laughed Aunt Ulrike.

"My God! nothing more than that—now I will speak out—that he wishes to marry Gretchen!" exclaimed Marie, sinking down upon a chair as if quite overcome with the declaration.

"Marry!" cried Aunt Ulrike and I in a breath; and I began to laugh as I had before at the thought of it.

"Do not talk so foolishly, Marie. Tell me seriously what you have to say," cried I at last, "for you cannot be in earnest."

"Yes, yes; I am bitterly in earnest, Gretchen, believe me," said Marie excitedly. "Why else should I be so beside myself, if this story did not make me so?"

"But Marie, it is impossible for one to think that he will marry me, stupid thing," continued I earnestly. "Only think, I marry! and Baron Senft!"

The idea appeared so comical to Marie that we both laughed and tittered childishly, and could not compose ourselves. In my excitement I threw my arms about Aunt Ulrike's neck, and peeped roguishly into her dear, mild eyes, in which I expected to find sympathy with our merriment.

But the look was earnest and thoughtful which met mine, and lightly shaking her head, she looked at us laughing girls.

"I cannot understand you," said she mildly but reproachfully. "Yesterday you laughed at this poor man and showed little tenderness of feeling; and your present behavior is quite incomprehensible to me. Gretchen, have you quite forgotten what I said to you this morning? Was I really so wrong when I said your friendly attentions might be otherwise interpreted? The matter seems very laughable to you, but will it to him whom you have so deceived?"

Auntie's words struck me like a bitter

reproach, and ashamed, I hid my face on her shoulder. She let me rest there for awhile, to allow me time for reflection; then she gently raised my head, pushed my hair back from my forehead, and looked earnestly and lovingly at me.

"You see, my child," she said softly, "that I was not wrong when I said the Baron had deeper feelings than his stiff, awkward carriage, and bad manners would indicate. It is very hard to go through the world alone and neglected; and you may not laugh when the solitary man believes to have found among men, among those who appear indifferent, yes, even unfriendly toward him, one who cares for him. And is it laughable that he has made such a mistake, and that he must continue his solitary, friendless existence?"

While my aunt was speaking the laugh had quite disappeared from my lips, and had given place in my heart to serious, earnest reproaches, which now like waves broke over me, and brought tears to my eyes.

"Ah! my God! auntie, I had not thought of that! that was very, very wrong in me!" said I deeply affected; and every minute my thoughtlessness rose higher before me, and appeared more and more threatening.

The quiet, serious figure, and the sad look of the poor Baron now suddenly appeared to me in a different light. The pain he would feel at being rejected, and his sorrow at being obliged to resign a hoped-for happiness, made him appear so very different in my eyes that I could not understand how I could so have regarded the other side of the matter. I now felt the deepest sympathy for the poor man. I would so gladly have cheered him, but how could I, how should I do that? And really to marry him—no one could seriously

think of that, and I least of all.

The more I thought, the sadder I became, for I knew no help for it. At length tear after tear rolled down my cheeks, and ashamed, I hid my face in my hands.

"O auntie! I am so dreadfully sorry, and I cannot help him at all!" lamented I, comfortless. "That I could have been so thoughtless! But who would have thought of that?"

My aunt was very quiet and did not interrupt my thoughts; but at last Marie, who after walking for a while up and down the room had gone thoughtfully to the window, came to me, and taking my hands from my face said:

"No; I cannot longer see this. I would rather not tell you the whole as it is, but I must; I see that clearly. Aunt Ulrike, you were quite right to check our foolish laughter, for it was childish, I see; but the matter is not quite as you see it. Please allow me to tell you about it. You, too, are not a little curious to know how I learned it, and how it is all connected."

"That is true; tell us, child," said my aunt.

Marie seated herself near me, placed her arm tenderly on my shoulder and began.

"Some hours ago as I returned home from a visit. I saw our good Baron Senft enter the house before me, and hasten to my brother's room. He did not see me, for which I was very sorry; but I thought he looked heated and excited as he ran up the steps in so great haste. I thought no more of the strange guest, but busied myself with my work. After a while my brother came, with an indescribably merry face, into the room where I was."

"Marie, guess who has just been with me," said he roguishly."

"Your friend, Baron Senft; that is not so difficult to guess," replied I."

"But guess what he wanted, my clever little sister," added he laughing."

"What do I care for your affairs? let me alone," said I, and went on with my work."

"But I think you do care, little one," said Eduard teasingly, and taking from me the silver candle stick that I was just polishing, 'Or is it so immaterial to you if it concerns your pretty, dark-eyed friend?'"

"What! the visit of the solitary concerns Gretchen? Impossible! What does he want? Tell me, dear, best Eduard," cried I, quickly laying aside my work."

"Eduard laughed, and rubbed his hands delightedly."

"At all events, your merry little friend was the subject of our conversation," said he mysteriously."

"But what does the Baron want? Tell me, what has Gretchen to do with it?" continued I impatiently."

"Nothing more than to marry her," said Eduard drily."

"You can think that I was not less astonished than you were a little while ago. Finally, when I had somewhat recovered from my surprise at the news, Eduard related to me the delightful conversation he had had with the Baron, which I will try to repeat to you as correctly as possible."

"Eduard," cried the Baron, as my brother joyfully greeted his singular guest, 'I want to beg of you a friendly turn.'"

"I will obey your commands with pleasure," replied Eduard. 'What is it? You will not fight a duel?'"

"Not exactly that, but something quite as important; I will marry," said the Baron earnestly."

"Marry! excellent! Who is the chosen of your heart, and what role shall I play, in order that, as I hope, we may have no tragedy?" said Eduard."

"It is Fraulein Margarethe Gessler," answered the Baron, 'and as she is your sister's friend, I beg you to carry my proposal of marriage to her.'"

"What! the pretty little Gretchen has conquered the misanthrope's heart!" cried Eduard in the greatest astonishment. 'Zounds! that is charming! But how in the world did it all happen? And that it is all complete, as if shot from a pistol!'"

"I see that she loves me," said the Baron shortly and drily."

"What one lives to see! You are certainly a real wizard," laughed Eduard. 'Then you are quite certain she loves you? Has she told you so?'"

"Not in words, but what is more than that—in her looks and acts," replied the Baron."

"Has the little Gretchen played the coquette with you? Thunder and lightning! I had scarcely believed that of the fresh little wild rose!" cried Eduard, unspeakably amused, for he clearly perceived that all was not quite right, and that the Baron had certainly seen and imagined more than there really was in the matter."

"We will not talk of coquetry," said the Baron offended. 'The young girl has unwittingly shown me that she is not indifferent to me, therefore I will pluck the rose that discovers itself in all loveliness to me.'"

"Zounds! you are quite poetical, old fellow," cried Eduard, biting his lips. 'So out of pure knightly sacrifice you will make that little girl your wife. Do you give her the same feelings that you expect of her?'"

" 'Eduard,' said the Baron, becoming warmer and more confidential, 'Eduard, you know that I was earnestly entreated by my friends to marry. They have already made every possible proposal to me, recommended to me the richest, most noble ladies, but all to no purpose. Do they not all laugh at and ridicule my stiff, serious manner? Do they not all make sport of me—all dislike me? Would they not all marry me on account of my wealth and old nobility, and then with their caprices drive me from the house in despair? No; such a marriage cannot be. I would much rather not marry at all. I considered that best; but in the last few days I have thought differently. Margarethe Gessler is the first womanly being who has shown me respect and confidence instead of disdain. I have seen it clearly in her eyes, and therefore I am quite determined to marry her.' "

" 'Humph! that is wonderful!' said Eduard becoming meditative. 'But again, what says your heart to this resolution? Is it only sympathy with the friendly child that prompts you to ask her hand?' "

" 'I am very desolate, my friend, and until now I have seldom had opportunity to open my heart to you,' said the Baron with trembling voice. 'I cannot be quite indifferent to the affection of so young and amiable a girl, and what I now lack in affection for her will come when she is my wife.' "

" 'But my friend, think! so young a girl!' continued Eduard shaking his head. 'She is scarcely sixteen years old.' "

" 'Youth is no fault,' answered the Baron calmly. "

" 'But she belongs to the common people, and your family to the old nobility. Think! what would your

friends say to that? You, Baron Senft, heir to and lord of Senftenburg!' continued Eduard earnestly. "

" 'That concerns no one. I am quite independent,' replied the Baron shortly. 'Only tell me if you will make the proposal in my name. I have neither opportunity nor cleverness enough to do it for myself.' "

" 'With all my heart! But do not be disappointed if you receive a different answer from what you expect,' said Eduard, reaching the Baron his hand. "

" 'Give yourself no anxiety on that score. My thanks will be your reward for the final attainment of my wish,' replied the Baron warmly and pleasantly. "

" 'Soon after the Baron took his leave, and Eduard sought me immediately to bring me the news, and to ask my assistance, he being unwilling to make the proposal himself. Now you know the whole of this fine story, and I think our good auntie does not now regard the affair so seriously as before. Then it is to be hoped that our Gretchen's heart does not find itself in so sad a condition as the good Baron believes; but this being, as he somewhat clearly expressed it, his principal reason for making the proposal, the whole thing falls to the ground, and we need not grieve ourselves lest his heart be broken.' "

" 'But I cannot drop it so lightly, dear Marie,' said auntie earnestly, as Marie ceased speaking. "His own affection may not perhaps have prompted him to make the proposal—of that there is no doubt; but yet, in spite of all that, we certainly cannot know how far his heart was concerned in it. I must confess I am much pleased that he chooses a simple girl without any other consideration than that she loves him, as he said, and

I am very sorry that he must now return to his former solitude."

"But certainly the little lesson cannot harm his vanity," said Marie earnestly. "He must consider himself very attractive to think such a nice girl as our little rose is over head and ears in love with him, just because she showed him some attention."

"I have not been able to tell you of my yesterday's meeting with him, which may have helped to strengthen him in that opinion," said I, ashamed; but Marie thought it was probably nothing serious, and this once past, the Baron would find that there were still young girls in the world who did not so highly value riches and high station as to make them a cloak for their want of affection, and who would also be quite suitable for him.

"It will make the poor man still more stiff and reserved than he already is," continued I sadly. "No, no, Marie, you judge too harshly, and in spite of all that you cast at him, I am dreadfully sorry for him."

"Well, then, go and marry him, my sweet. Perhaps you will do a good deed, and make a useful man of him," cried Marie roguishly.

"No, I cannot do that," laughed I with tears in my eyes. "He asks for me only because he believes that I love him. I should certainly deceive him if I were to accept his proposal, so let us not talk of it. But I sincerely hope he may soon find what he seeks, and what I can never be to him."

"We will hope so, child," said Aunt Ulrike kindly, kissing my forehead. "Let us hope the matter will rest here,


and lead to no further results. But you, my little daughter, may learn from this severe lesson that a young girl cannot be too reserved toward young gentlemen. So many girls have fallen into coquetry simply because they were led by their thoughtlessness to say and do things which offend against the established rules of society. That the Baron may not now consider you coquettish in spite of your refusal, I sincerely hope and wish. Of a less earnest and true man than he, you might scarcely expect another interpretation of your conduct."

Quietly bending over the dear hand of my aunt which I held in mine, I pressed a kiss upon it, and left the room with Marie. All childish merriment had left us both, and with earnest voices we talked long over the best way in which to send my refusal to the Baron. Of course Eduard took upon himself the unpleasant duty; but in spite of the fine tact with which he informed his friend of the true state of the case, the result of my refusal was that the poor solitary again for a long time concealed himself behind the walls of his hermitage.

I could not without genuine self-reproach think of this event, which had seriously agitated me; and I continually saw in my mind's eye those dark, melancholy eyes that looked at me so earnestly and inquiringly. O, what would I not have given to be able to procure for that excellent man a happiness which should make those sad eyes beam with joy! I myself could never have brought this change about; that knew only too well, and the Baron would soon enough have learned this.

IX.

MORE NEWS.

 LFE in my aunt's house became more and more pleasant and harmonious the longer I remained, and for a long time I had not felt that longing which had at first so unspeakably tormented me, for my dear father's house. I understood better and better how well for my intellectual development it was for me to spend a part of my youth with Aunt Ulrike, and the inexpressible love which she showed me, carried me more lightly through the thousand faults and mistakes against which I, poor backfischchen, had daily to struggle.

In the close intercourse which existed between Aunt Ulrike and myself, it never escaped me if her usually cheerful face became saddened; so I was much disquieted when one morning I found her sitting in her arm chair agitated and in tears; she who looked upon all things so quietly, and had gained an unusual mastery over her feelings. A letter lay before her on the table, and as I hastened to her and asked what ailed her she quietly motioned me to withdraw, which I of course did in great concern. I waited a long time before she came to me. I heard her walking to and fro in her room, showing that she was endeavoring to compose herself; then at last a rustling of paper, and the lid of her secretary rattled as she wrote.

At last she came to me, sad it is true, but still calm as ever. She seated herself near me, softly stroked my face and said, "Gretchen, I must tell you

something of what so greatly disturbed me. You are a prudent child, and love me, therefore I may always trust you in some degree with what burdens my heart. Of course you will speak of this to no one but your good Marie and her mother, to whom I myself will tell it."

I kissed her dear hand, which I so often and so gladly did, when I wished to show to her my love and veneration; and in a soft voice she continued, "You know, my dear child, that I have been a widow for four years, after spending years of prosperity and happiness by the side of my excellent and beloved husband. We were so much attached to each other after God had taken our child again, that our happiness was complete. It was a sad, sad time when I lost the sweet boy; but the tender love of my husband helped me to bear my grief, and at last my heart submitted quietly to God's will. But another grief soon oppressed us, and again my husband stood consolingly by my side. His only brother, to whom he was united by the strongest bonds of love, had some years after the death of his first wife, married a young girl who understood how to captivate him by her beauty and grace. True, people had on all sides warned him of her giddiness and capriciousness of character, but Adolph refused to listen to them, and allowed himself to be carried on, blinded by admiration and passion. Unfortunately the sorrow of his fourteen-year-old daughter was unavailing

to prevent his rash marriage, although the richly gifted child much needed a second true mother."

"But only too soon my brother-in-law saw how rash he had been. During the seven years of his union with Kathinka, he has become, through grief, almost an old man, for it is impossible for two natures less to accord than his and that of his frivolous, heartless wife. Adolph is too feeble, and prizes home quiet too highly, to oppose all the freaks and foolishnesses of his pleasure-seeking wife as he should do; and as it may well appear to you, this marriage is an endlessly unhappy one. That the education of the little Eugenie near such a mother was naturally no good one, you can well suppose; for the father's authority availed nothing to keep his child from all injurious influences. Eugenie grew up, endowed with talents and bodily superiorities, a finished young lady, graceful and accomplished as only a mother could wish; but if also not giddy and heartless like her, in spite of whose influence she had kept her naturally good heart, so also without proper regard for others, as I have often had opportunity to observe. Her independence and originality though interesting, are also dangerous, and with such a foundation her education needed to be very differently directed. I once urged my brother-in-law to allow me to take Eugenie for a time, but the poor man could not bring himself to give up the only joy of his life, so matters remained as they were until now. But the letter which I received to-day informs me that my brother-in-law, to avoid domestic care for a time, will go abroad as ambassador for his government, seemingly sent away, but really at his own request. His wife will not accompany him; and in order not to

leave Eugenie in the care of her giddy mother, he earnestly requests me to allow her to stay with me during his absence. I have just replied that I am ready to receive her, and I expect her early arrival."

"As this change in our domestic affairs gives me great concern, my Gretchen," continued my aunt kindly, after a pause, "I have disclosed to you a part of their sad family history, of which I have never before spoken to any one. In consideration of this, you will exercise forbearance toward Eugenie's faults, which have arisen from such surroundings. My duty toward our new inmate is no unimportant one, and we will both, with good courage and sincere love, await our Eugenie."

I had listened with deep interest to Aunt Ulrike's narration, but my heart trembled when she spoke of Eugenie's coming. I looked anxiously into her eyes to seek courage to meet the coming change. I had just begun to feel at ease here in her house; my timid reserve toward my aunt had but just yielded to an inner confidence, and how would it be when a third person came between us—especially such an important, brilliant, independent girl as Eugenie? What a sad part I, poor village girl, should play beside such a being! How disdainfully would she regard me, and how many new annoyances would her coming bring me, when I had scarcely begun to feel myself at home in my new circumstances!

Such thoughts flew like lightning through my mind, and threw my heart into the greatest disquietude. But I recalled what my aunt had told me of the troubled circumstances in which Eugenie had hitherto lived, and her desire that we should meet her with good courage and true hearts.

Thoroughly ashamed that I had egotistically thought only of myself and my discomforts, I pressed the hand of my honored aunt, who drew me lovingly toward her, and kissing me looked tenderly into my eyes.

"Have no fear my child," said she softly; "you shall suffer no loss through our new comer. I shall stand by your side to help and protect you, and my love will support you when it is necessary. Only trust to me, and be of good cheer."

It was as if she had read all the fears of my poor heart; for without my speaking a word she seemed to know how weak and fearful I had been. Blushing deeply I now confessed my egotistical thoughts to her, and took good heart for all that might come, trusting fully in her who had so often been my comfort and refuge.

One afternoon only a few weeks after this conversation, came the expected guest. My aunt went to the station to meet her, while I waited in anxious expectation at home, behind my steaming coffee-pot, in which I had made the warm, welcoming drink for the stranger. Soon the carriage arrived; and peeping from behind the curtain I saw near Aunt Ulrike a tall, slim figure get out and run lightly up the steps to the entrance, leaving the charge of her travelling effects to a pretty young girl, who was loaded to the chin with them. I hastened to meet them, and was introduced to Eugenie by Aunt Ulrike as her dear niece.

"So, so; that is the backfischchen from the country of whom you have told me," said Eugenie condescendingly, casting a hasty glance at me. Then she reached me, in passing, her finger tips, which were encased in soft, gray gloves, and turning to Aunt Ulrike con-

tinued pertly, "Do you intend to open an institution for young girls, that you receive one after another, Aunt Ulrike?"

"I hope Gretchen will be a dear sister to you," replied my aunt softly, without heeding Eugenie's unpleasant words, and lightly stroking my hair.

Eugenie turned laughingly toward me and said, "Well, I have been able to get along without a sister until now, but I have nothing against our being good friends, little cousin." So saying she came quickly toward me, and before I could think gave me a hearty kiss on my lips. Then turning as quickly toward the overloaded young girl who now entered the room she said, "Lisette, lay the bundles all on the floor, and bring me a glass of water; I am perishing with heat and thirst."

But before Lisette could do so, her ladyship threw herself upon a chair, and putting out her feet said, "Take off for me these abominable fur shoes in which I look like a Laplander, and bring me my slippers."

Lisette did as she was bidden, kneeling before Eugenie, who amused herself by kicking the "abominable fur shoes" over Lisette's head into the opposite corner, laughing like a child.

I stood quite dumb near this strange being who was so different from what I had imagined — proud, despotic, at the same time childish, and above all, so unaccountably free and unconcerned, as if she had been with Aunt Ulrike for a hundred years;—it was to me something unheard of. But auntie seemed not to notice the strange behavior of the new comer; and laying aside her things she seated herself in the corner of the sofa and said eagerly, "Now Gretchen, I hope you have prepared a good cup of coffee for us, it

will do us good. . Make haste, Eugenie, or I shall leave none for you."

"Coffee! Heaven preserve us! I never drink that!" cried Eugenie, shaking her curly brown head, and putting a pair of bright blue slippers, embroidered with white silk upon, her pretty little feet.

"Coffee! a detestable drink! Bah! It spoils the complexion and causes freckles."

"But what do you drink instead of coffee, child?" asked auntie.

"In the morning chocolate, and in the afternoon tea or nothing," replied Eugenie lightly, while she stretched herself in auntie's comfortable arm-chair, and moved her bright blue feet up and down in the air.

I blushed with surprise as Eugenie seated herself so composedly in auntie's chair, which a holy awe had always kept me from taking; but I could not suppose this little princess to be troubled by any such feeling. My aunt quietly allowed her to do as she pleased, and turning to me desired me to make some tea for Eugenie, as it would do her good to have some warm drink. Eugenie said nothing against it, so I did as I was bidden.

The young girl had in the mean time taken a little brush from her pocket, and with it cleaned the fabulously long finger nails of her charmingly white hands, quite as if she were alone in the room, taking no notice of her surroundings. Having done that she sprang up from her chair, arranged her brown curls before the glass, and then walked about, now in the sitting room, now in auntie's room, examining all the pictures, books, and about forth.

ment, a charmingly old-fashioned at his or is here, auntie," cried she accompany Our old trumpery mamma

sent to the second-hand dealer long ago. Every few years we have everything new."

I was quite shocked at Eugenie's talk. The splendid, solid, costly furniture she called old trumpery! Here, where during the early part of my stay I had scarcely dared to move, on account of the costly things that surrounded me, here I heard the same things denounced as old lumber! That was too much, and anxiously I glanced at auntie to see what she would say.

She colored slightly and bit her lips, then said quietly, "On this old furniture hangs the charm of pleasant remembrances, Eugenie. It was the witness of my happiest days, and has grown old with me. I would not miss or change for new one piece of it, for it is closely linked with me and my destiny. Who loves new surroundings instead of the old either thinks unwillingly of past days, or has a worldly, unquiet mind, for which only the new possesses charm and worth."

Eugenie cast a strange look at the speaker, half laughing, half serious. "What fine thoughts you have auntie," said she quite unembarrassed. "You are splendidly suited to the old furniture; you are quite as venerable and old-fashioned as it. But you are right; what you say pleases me; it had never occurred to me before."

"You have apparently not thought much of what is true and good, child," said my aunt softly; "I hope that will soon come."

Eugenie, somewhat irritated, seated herself quietly in her chair, and I brought her a cup of tea.

"I want no tea; I am hot enough," said she fretfully, pushing the cup rudely back so that the tea was spilled on my dress. I turned quickly, for I

was very angry with the ill-mannered girl; but auntie said very decidedly, though quietly,

"You will drink that cup of tea Eugenie; in the first place it will do you good after your journey, and in the second it has just been prepared for you by Gretchen. You could have saved her the trouble if you knew before that you did not wish to drink any."

Eugenie, astonished, raised herself a little from her seat and blushed painfully. She sat awhile like a refractory child in her chair, looking at her white finger nails, then suddenly springing up she snatched the cup, put in sugar and cream, and having drunk the contents at one draught, pushed the empty cup toward me. "Another, Gretchen," said she commandingly. I turned it for her and she drank the second cup just as quickly as the first. She again offered me the empty cup saying "Another!"

I looked inquiringly at my aunt, for Eugenie was evidently defiant and wished to provoke auntie. But she said very gently, "No, Gretchen, pour no more tea; Eugenie will injure herself."

My wilful cousin said nothing, but, very angry, sat in the easy chair drumming with her blue slippers on the carpet.

"Gretchen," cried she at last, throwing back her head, "are you also here in penitentiary?"

"Eugenie!" said I tremulously; it was impossible for me to say another word.

Eugenie expected no answer, but napping her fingers began to hum. Auntie went quietly to her room and closed the door behind her, leaving us so alone. Tears stood in my eyes, for it was evident that the wicked Eu-

genie had deeply wounded auntie, and therefore I said reproachfully.

"Dear Eugenie, how could you so grieve auntie?"

Eugenie continued humming, and gave me no answer.

"You cannot at all believe how good she is, dear cousin. You should really be more polite toward her, she so much deserves your love and esteem," resumed I earnestly. "You do not know her; but I have been here so long that I have learned to love her sincerely, and to value her great worth. She is so well disposed toward all!"

Here I was interrupted by a loud yawn from Eugenie, while she held her hands over her ears.

"You good, heavenly creature! you are a tiresome Philistine!" cried she throwing herself back in her chair. "*O sancta simplicitas!* what will become of me poor heathen among these holy ones!"

She made such a comical face, thereby looking so resigned, that in spite of my earnest frame of mind I could not help laughing.

"Tell me, you little reason-box, how old are you, that you take upon yourself to lecture me?" continued she then, throwing bread crumbs at me. "Are you already past the 'stupid' time? You appear to me to be still a back-fischchen. Are you fourteen years and seven weeks old?"

"O yes; they, happily, lie behind me, if not very long," said I laughing, and threw the crumbs back into her face.

"But how can you allow yourself to be called Gretchen?" said Eugenie further; "it sounds like a fictitious name, and I can't bear it. I will call you Marguerite, or better, Daisy, which means the same."

"And suits very well the simple girl, does it not?" said I gaily, for I well understood that a sarcasm was intended.

"Well you are not stupid if you are simple," interrupted she lightly.

"Not so stupid as I look," replied I mockingly.

"Who says you look so?" cried she quickly. "Not I; for on the whole I think you are passably pretty."

"You mean the beauty of sixteen years, when every girl is pretty because she has fresh color and a youthful form," interrupted I.

"Let who will dispute with you; you are a witch!" cried she throwing a whole biscuit at my back as I turned it toward her.

"Do not so waste the precious gifts of God, Eugenie," said I quickly, laying the bread again on the table "Auntie never, never, allows bread to be played with."

"For God's sake! then I will let it alone," cried she in pretended fright, "or I must in the end swallow all the bread of which I have made balls, as a little while ago your humble tea, on account of which my head still burns like fire."

"Because you were unreasonable about it, if I may honestly tell you so," replied I gathering the tea things together.

"I must see if auntie now wishes to devour me, as she did a little while ago," said Eugenie, going toward the door of auntie's room; and before I, in my astonishment, could hold her back, she snapped her fingers at me and disappeared through the door.

"O my God! is that a girl," said I looking anxiously after her, for I never ventured to disturb auntie when she had gone to her room; but she did so after having made her so angry by her in-

proper conduct. I listened attentively expecting to hear angry conversation; but it was not long before I heard Eugenie's clear, childish laughter, the door opened, and in the tender embrace of her niece, auntie returned to the room with her.

"You need not think that you have effected the reconciliation, holy Margarethe," said Eugenie tossing her head; but a pleasant look of Aunt Ulrike's told me that this was even the case. I was glad to see our good aunt cheerful again, let who might be the cause of it.

"Now come to your room, child," said auntie, conducting Eugenie to her pleasant little room which adjoined our own.

I had feared that auntie would place me in Eugenie's room with her, for which I should have been very sorry, our cozy little room had become so dear to me after I had overcome all the difficulties that I had encountered there. But my curtained bed still stood in its accustomed place, and nothing had been said of a change.

Eugenie's room was elegantly but simply furnished, and apparently made an agreeable impression upon the spoiled child; for singing, she skipped merrily from one object to another.

"This fine landscape must be taken away," said she, pausing suddenly before the small fireplace over which hung a beautiful Claude Lorraine. "Here must my dearly beloved father go, that I may still see him, although the naughty man does not at all deserve it, since he has so faithlessly left me and delivered me into the barbarous hands of a certain Aunt Ulrike. Quick, Lisette! unpack, that I may have my papa again under my eyes. He certainly understands me best of all men,

and knows whether I am as bad as certain people think me."

She impatiently pulled at the cords and pasteboard enveloping a large picture that Lisette had just taken from one of her many trunks. But in spite of her eagerness she was unable to remove the picture from its wrappings, so that at last I took it and undertook to do it for her.

"You are too hasty, Eugenie, you cannot do it so," said I, carefully disentangling the string in which she had tied a true gordian knot.

"There, take it! I do all so stupidly!" cried she impetuously; but she stood, impatiently, near me, and allowed me scarcely time and room to do the work. Finally the last paper was off, and with a loud cry of joy Eugenie took her father's picture in both arms, pressed it eagerly to her heart, and covered it with a thousand kisses, while great tears rolled down her cheeks.

"Little father! my own dear little father!" cried she tenderly. "Now I have you, if you are far away from your poor Eugenie, and know nothing more of her, you bad, bad, dear papa!"

It was really most affecting to see that wonderfully lovely girl caress with such childish tenderness the picture of that estimable man; and all the pique which I had cherished toward her on account of her strange behavior now disappeared. Her conduct showed clearly that she had the best, most loving heart; but under how many husks were the golden grains concealed! I stood silent near Aunt Ulrike, who, deeply moved, watched Eugenie. Her eyes were dim with tears, either at sight of her loved brother-in-law or the agitation of her strange niece. She stepped up to Eugenie, and as she bent over the picture pressed the dear child tenderly

to her breast, holding her long and silently in her embrace. Eugenie wept silently on the neck of her true aunt, and a close bond of love was formed between her and the dear aunt who watched over her.

But our Eugenie could not long yield to sadness. Suddenly she collected herself, shook back the disordered curls from her forehead, dried her eyes and cried joyously, "That is a fine story! My father has again caused me to weep, and I promised myself that I would not do it again, after his traveling carriage turned the corner. Quick! on the nail with the sinner, who has made me such a chicken-hearted little creature."

She sprang upon the stuffed easy-chair and hung the beautiful oil painting on the nail. Then nodding roguishly to it, she kissed it heartily once more and sprang down again, lightly and gaily as a bird from a branch.


The evening passed quite agreeably with unpacking, arranging, and conversation; and Eugenie was so cheerful and agreeable, and talked so cleverly, so interestingly and so piquantly, that she won our secret admiration.

On retiring she kissed me heartily, still insisting that I was a little witch; then skipped lightly after her maid who preceded her with a light, and for a long time we heard her talking and laughing merrily.

When we were alone Aunt Ulrike stroked my hair fondly as she always did when she was pleased with me, then retired for an hour to her little room, during which time I sought my bed. Thoughts of the new comer long drove sleep from my eyes, but at last the friendly dream-god played around me with pleasing pictures.

X.

EUGENIE.

 WHEN I awoke the next morning my first glance fell upon Aunt Ulrike who stood by my bed, and had been regarding for a long time the late sleeper. She nodded gaily at me, and said, "How sweetly you have slept little Gretchen; truly I did not like to disturb you, although it is already late. You appear to have had very pleasant dreams, for you laughed like a child in your sleep."

"I dreamed of our new comer, Aunt Ulrike," said I sitting up in bed. "She was just playing a very funny prank. She had put her fine lace collar on the neck of our old dog, and her bright blue slippers on his feet. She was just about to put on a veil, when 'young Miss would be dressed' as she said, when I awoke. How can one dream such silly things!"

"Our spoiled Eugénie is quite capable of such pranks," laughed auntie.

"Well, I will get up, or she will surprise me in bed; she is perhaps accustomed to rise early," said I earnestly, and quickly caught up my clothes to dress myself.

"Oh!" said auntie seating herself on my bed, "you need not hasten on that account; Eugénie still lies in the feathers; I have just been in her room. True, she is no longer asleep; she was lying with her eyes open, and appeared to have been reading, but had no desire to get up. She is a spoiled child, who does as she pleases. At first I must

allow her to follow her own inclination, difficult as it will be for me. I depend upon her own good sense and good heart, which will in time bring her into the right way. Your example, my Gretchen, will be of assistance to me; for by association with you, my good child, she will soon see which of you two pursues the better course to become a useful woman."

"My example, auntie!" cried I in astonishment. "How can I, poor, awkward girl, set an example for the elegant, accomplished Eugénie? You can not be in earnest."

"But my dear child," replied she kindly, "you are a simple, unaffected girl, who have, it is true, but little fine social culture, and must still learn very many things before your education is finished; but your modesty and good sense, and your simple, natural demeanor, can well show the proud Eugénie, in spite of all her fine culture and outward elegance, what she lacks, and which of you possesses the greater moral worth. With all her fine accomplishments, Eugénie still lacks the true culture, that of the heart; and I hope that in time she will receive it here with us. Unfortunately that poor child has had until now no opportunity to perfect herself in that; may it not now be too late, and may we be able to give this richly endowed being what she so much needs."

Auntie embraced me tenderly, while I hid my glowing face on her shoulder. Ah! her words had made me unspeakably

bly happy. Often already she had shown me by some word or glance that she was not discontented with me, and that in spite of my many mistakes, I still possessed her love and confidence; but I had never before received so much praise from her. It might have made me proud and conceited, but she understood me well enough to know that her words would not have that effect. She only wished by her praise to make me more sure and self-confident in my association with Eugenie. I readily guessed these thoughts of my aunt, and her smile confirmed my supposition.

"You are a little cheat, Gretchen," said she cheerfully. "You are certainly not quite free from faults. I cannot deny that above all I heartily wish you might be quite master of yourself, that in the race with Eugenie you may not be outstripped by her, which would greatly increase her vain-gloriousness. But I hope it will soon come. I saw that you yesterday bravely resisted her caprices. You have thus conquered a good part of the ground, of which I am very glad."

Laughingly I related to auntie my yesterday's conversation with Eugenie, which amused her much. "Yes, yes; one must be on her guard with such a girl, for if one once yields she has lost the game. Now be brave, for much good will result to her from her intercourse with you, if you understand how to take advantage of it. But now make haste to dress, or Eugenie will fully surprise you in the fullest negligence." With auntie's help I quickly dressed, and had the pleasure once more to receive her praise for doing so well and neatly all that belonged to the arrangement of the toilet. "Do you remember the first morning?" asked she smilingly, "how persistently I corrected

you; how you sprang out of bed with your naked feet, and sat on the floor in your night clothes; how you washed without water, and at last spread a whole deluge about you?"

"O hush! hush! auntie, how could I forget that?" cried I, covering her mouth with my hand. "Then I did not think I should ever be able to do it properly—that I honestly confess. But after a time I began to hope your stupid backfischchen would become a sensible woman."

"Time will show," said auntie, nodding at me. "Now go and see if Eugenie will not soon come, or else we must breakfast without her; my stomach has waited long enough on account of my little lazy skin."

I hastened to Eugenie's room to call her to breakfast. But what was my astonishment to find the young lady in bed, and just about to sip her chocolate, which Lisette had brought her.

"Good morning, Daisy," cried she cheerfully, as she bade her maid put her breakfast near her bed. "What horrid stuff you have for chocolate in this house!" continued she making a wry face. "It is certainly sweet pap for babies. Whew! Mamma must immediately send me some of her vanilla chocolate; do you hear Lisette? Put it down at once on the order card. But good heavens! holy Margarethe already dressed!" exclaimed she looking at me wonderingly from head to foot. "What is the matter? Are you going to take a journey, that you have dressed so early?"

"No; I always do so, Eugenie," replied I calmly; "auntie does not like to see young girls go about in morning dresses, because she thinks it leads to bad habits."

"Well, she must accustom herself to

it in me," said Eugenie shortly, stroking the embroidery on her night-jacket; "I am no peasant girl, obliged to go directly from bed into the street; I will not allow my comfort to be interfered with."

"Every one as she pleases, dear cousin," replied I shrugging my shoulders. "I have made it a duty to follow all auntie's wishes, so I do this also, although I was accustomed to wear a morning dress at home. Now I find it very agreeable to be dressed early; one saves much time by it."

"Bah! time! what do I care for that!" cried Engenie scornfully; "the day is long enough without that."

"I would like to have it as long again here; the time always passes too swiftly for me," I replied.

"You are a fool, Daisy," cried she petulantly. "But what do you want with me? Have you come only to give me another lecture? If so you may spare yourself the trouble."

"I did not begin the conversation Eugenie," said I coolly; "I only came to call you to breakfast; but since you prefer to take it by yourself, I need stay here no longer."

I turned toward the door and was about to leave the room when Eugenie's laughter struck my ear, and involuntarily I turned toward her.

"You are a precious little spit-fire," cried she gaily. "Now go directly to our estimable aunt, and tell her of all that has just happened here, and how I have excited the holy Margarethe's anger. Then you two exemplary beings seat yourselves opposite to each other and shed hot tears over the black sheep that has come into your pious flock."

"Do not talk so nonsensically Eugenie," replied I, laughing in spite of myself. As auntie was still waiting for

me I hastened away, followed through the door by a silken slipper which the frolicsome girl threw after me.

Auntie shook her head, and we quietly and seriously drank our coffee. We had not quite finished when the door opened, and Eugenie's rosy face appeared to us.

"There she is now!" cried I in joyous surprise, hastening toward her. Auntie rose also to give her hand to Eugenie, but the latter stepped slowly toward us and said,

"Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."

I was shocked at this sacrilege, as if I myself had been guilty of it. Auntie looked up quickly, her face became deeply flushed, and more stern than I had ever seen her, she looked at Eugenie.

"Thoughtless girl," said she earnestly, let me never again hear such blasphemy! I can excuse frivolity and rudeness in you, but he who scoffs at holy things I cannot tolerate; for him have I only the greatest contempt. I hope you will understand how unjustifiable your conduct was, and sincerely repent of it."

Eugenie stood affrighted before our angry aunt, having quite lost her self-assurance. True, she soon recovered herself and turned away; but auntie's deep earnestness made it impossible for her to reply, and silently we seated ourselves again at our breakfast. Eugenie appeared quite uneasy. She soon rose and moved about the room. She opened the piano, and her fingers glide over the keys, disconnecting it is true, but in so masterly a manner that I listened in astonishment.

"Play something for us, dear cousin," said auntie kindly, and Eugenie

heartily rejoiced to be freed from her embarrassment by auntie's kind words, now passed her fingers rapidly over the keys. It was truly a delight to listen to her, for her touch was exquisite; she played with great ease, and such expression as I had seldom heard. She soon began to sing, and her clear soprano voice, and her rarely distinct enunciation quite enchanted me, and the expression of auntie's earnest face became more and more happy. Music is the best mediator, comforter and helper in many troubled circumstances of life; and it helped us through the unpleasant situation in which Eugenie's foolishness had placed us. As she rose from the piano auntie reached out her hand to her and praised her fine musical execution.

"You must praise my teachers, not me," cried Eugenie, carelessly throwing herself upon the sofa. "They have tormented me enough with it more than it is worth."

"But you should thank them, for through it you have become very proficient in this fine accomplishment," replied auntie. Yawning, Eugenie replied in her light careless way, and auntie sighed lightly and said no more.

Some time after, I went into the sitting room with the book of monthly expenses in my hand, carefully carrying many small coins on the cover of the book. Eugenie passed me, humming, and before I could think, knocked the money and book from my hand, and the coins rolled all about the floor. Then I laughed like a silly child at what I had done. Greatly perplexed, I went down to gather up the little pieces of money.

Then, Aunt Ulrike, who had seen me in her room, came in, bade me sit down, and Eugenie to pick up what she

had thrown down. Eugenie looked at her in astonishment; then throwing her head back, opened the door and called in her maid.

"Pick up the money, Lisette," she commanded; but as she stooped to obey, Aunt Ulrike said,

"Lisette, go away; it is already provided for."

As Lisette left the room, auntie again bade Eugenie bend her proud back, and repair the mischief she had done.

Eugenie knew not whether to trust her ears; but the quiet earnestness of our aunt awed her, and without replying she began the troublesome work. With moans and scoldings she went about the floor; but she had scarcely gathered a handful before she threw them angrily down again, so that she would never have finished had I not at last taken pity upon and assisted her.

"Ah! my feet! my limbs!" cried she when it was done. "I feel as if I had been broken on a wheel! It will be the death of me!" I allowed her to complain, and went about my work. When I came back she was gone, and supposing her to be dressing, I went to her room to assist her. What was my astonishment to find her in bed. Seeing me, she overwhelmed me with reproaches and complaints, and said she was treated like a culprit here. It would certainly kill her; she already felt thoroughly sick and miserable.

Terrified, I hastened to tell Aunt Ulrike of Eugenie's condition; but she laughed at my apprehension, and said quietly, "Let her alone, child; she will soon be well again; but do not go to her; we must leave her to herself." Then taking a book, we began our daily reading, and Lessing's inspiring words that she read to me turned my thoughts into more pleasant channels.

Our reading was after a time interrupted by my friend Marie, who came to inquire after the new comer; but Eugenie being still in her room, we had time to talk with each other.

It was near noon, and Marie was about to leave, when Eugenie suddenly appeared, most elegantly dressed, and with a most proud and haughty air. I introduced my friend to her, and asked whether she was better; but she leaned languidly back in the easy-chair, nodded coolly to Marie, and appeared to take no further notice of us. Marie soon left, quite beside herself at Eugenie's conduct. I sought, however, to excuse her; but my assurance that she could be infinitely agreeable, my little friend could scarcely believe.

I seated myself quietly at my work, while my cousin rested carelessly on the sofa. She soon began to laugh merrily, and wondering I looked up at her.

"Is she always so blue and so fair?" asked Eugenie.

"Whom do you mean?"

"Why, your Castor, my Pollux!"

"Yes, she is always fair, as I am always black. And she generally wears blue; I like to see her in it. How did she please you Eugenie?"

"As well as such a meek lambkin can. She needs only death's head and a bible, and the penitent Magdalena is complete!"

I was enraged. My Marie, my idolized friend to be so abused! I was about to give her some bitter words in reply, when I suddenly felt myself caught from behind, and Eugenie peeped roguishly into my wet eyes.

"Right; the storm will immediately burst forth!" cried she kissing me. "Cast your lightnings down upon my repentant head, O Kronion; I deserve nothing better!"

I was obliged to laugh in spite of myself. It was impossible to remain angry with that girl.

"What are you doing?" asked she taking my work from my hand.

"Something very economical and prosaic, as you see; I am mending stockings."

"You mend them! For Heaven's sake! why do you do that? No respectable person does it for herself!"

"I did not know that such work was dishonorable. Auntie says the less help we need from others, the better off we are, because we make ourselves so much the more independent of other men."

"Humph! That's not bad. Do you do anything more for yourself? make your dresses and under-clothing?"

"My under-clothing of course, and auntie has promised that I shall also learn to make my dresses, so that bye-and-bye I can make them for my mother and sisters; in the country it is doubly desirable."

"But how in the world do you find time for all this work? I could never accomplish it if the day were a million hours long."

"Now you see why it is well to rise early and dress at once. One who has anything to do cannot always lie on the sofa!"

"Witch that you are!" said she playing ball with my rolled-up stocking.

"How do you feel now Eugenie?" asked I sympathizingly. "Are you again quite well?"

"That cannot concern you have but just the she perversely; "I before any one of yourself about me."

I laughed in my sleep, clearly that the best way to was, as auntie said, to take no notice of

her sickness. Who knows how much longer she would have remained in bed if we had troubled ourselves about her.

In the afternoon auntie made some calls with us, in order to introduce her second foster-daughter to her friends. Ah! how Eugenie's appearance contrasted with mine on my first visit! I involuntarily compared myself, poor wooden girl, anxious and awkward, the flush of shame and embarrassment coming quickly to my cheeks, with the elegant Eugenie. How amiable could she be, when she would! Towards strangers she was always so, therefore she won all hearts, and no one imagined what unhappy hours this girl could cause at home. Even Marie was somewhat reconciled toward Eugenie, when, in the afternoon, she appeared so different, and was affable and talkative as usual.

The visit at Fran Delius' passed very delightfully. Amanda again floated into the room as at my first visit, and seated herself comfortably in the easy-chair, using now her smelling-bottle, now her fan or handkerchief. Of course she quite ignored me, and treated Eugenie with such a lofty air that I became quite uneasy.

To my astonishment this treatment

did not appear to trouble Eugenie. She quietly regarded Amanda for a while, and I saw her lip quiver with suppressed mirth. She, too, leaned lightly back in her chair, even more comfortably than Amanda, and following her example drew up a footstool, used smelling-bottle and handkerchief, and spoke even more languidly than her opponent; and it all appeared to be so natural to her, that I looked in astonishment at the usually gay Eugenie.

Amanda apparently did not know what to think of it. Involuntarily she raised herself somewhat from her comfortable position, attempted to enter into a sensible conversation, and behaved much less affectedly. But Eugenie did not disturb herself, answered as Amanda had done before, and bestowed much more attention upon me, poor thing, than upon the daughter of the house. But when the lady of the house herself spoke to her she was as amiable and polite as ever. And so Eugenie conducted herself, until at last Amanda threw aside her absurd manner, and spoke and acted naturally. Then Eugenie also adopted her natural tone, and those two strange beings quite well entertained each other.



XI.

EUGENIE AGAIN.

THE next morning I went early to Eugenie's room to see if she was again quite well, and to-day, it is true, she received me much as usual, but still cordially and kindly.

"Do you wish to be present at my dressing, Daisy?" asked she, ringing the bell on her night stand. "You shall have the honor to put on my clean chemise for me, and no one shall dispute the privilege with you. You know the fine story of Louis XIV, who was obliged to stand for half an hour in nature's costume because, just at the moment when the highest among those who were with him was about to put on a certain garment, a still higher entered the room, to whom this highest of all offices in the State of France must be yielded up."

I knew the story well, but quietly allowed Eugenie to relate it, looking in the meantime at the embroidery on her linen.

"How beautiful that is," said I admiringly.

"Do you like it?" asked she indifferently. "Select what you please, the stuff is all alike to me."

"But it all costs much money, Eugenie; it cannot all be the same to you." I ventured to object.

"Bah! money!" cried she shrugging her shoulders. "What do I care for that? Mamma says that is a secondary consideration. Papa has enough of it."

"But you could put it to a much better use than to throw it away so, dear cousin. How much happiness would a small part of what you squander afford to others."

"Put it to a better use? What do you mean by that little one?"

"As I said, you could make others who have less, happy with it."

"Whom do you mean? I give Lisette all she needs, and I always give something to whoever else asks me."

"Never mind; you do not understand what I mean, dear Eugenie," said I. "But get up now for I have no more time to wait."

Eugenie called Lisette to her, and as she put out one foot after the other to her, she put on first the fine stockings, and then the blue silk slippers. She then unfastened all the bands and buttons on the night-clothes of the young lady, who allowed her to do all without herself raising a finger. I looked on in surprise, but without speaking a word. When all was ready, and Lisette had put on her fine, soft morning-dress, which was lined throughout with white silk, I laughingly invited her sometime to attend at the making of my toilet, in return for my visit this morning. That pleased her much, and she promised to do so. Of course I did not believe that she would, and was therefore greatly astonished to see her standing by my bed when I awoke the next morning.

"No; such a lazy-bones!" said she triumphantly, as I looked at her in astonishment. "Take example from Eugenie, the brave girl who has been mending stockings for three hours." I saw heaped up near her quite a mountain of them. She had one drawn over her arm, and industriously drew the long needle and thread back and forth in it. Soon I perceived that she was only making a pretence of mending them, and had really no idea of the work; but ignoring that, I looked at her in astonishment. Of course I echoed her joyous laughter, and could not find words enough to express my admiration of her heroism. At last she pushed aside the whole pile of stockings, and stretched herself comfortably in the easy-chair.

"Now get out of the feathers quickly," said I, catching up my clothing.

"Do you dress yourself, Daisy?" asked she in astonishment, watching my fingers which quickly fastened and unfastened bands and hooks.

"Of course, no one else can do it well and quickly enough," replied I. "I could not bear to have a waiting-maid pulling and tugging about me, and to wait until it pleased her to serve me. One serves one's self best. You cannot believe how pleasant it is to be able to do all one's self."

"Yes, Lisette is a dreadful block-head," said Eugenie thoughtfully. "You cannot think how she vexes and torments me through her stupidity. And just when I need her she can never come. You are ten times better off in that respect than I. I really envy you."

"Try to dress yourself for once dear heart, then you will be free from all vexations," said I laughing, and began combing my thick hair.

"But I cannot; mamma says it is improper to serve one's self."

"Now, do you know what? I will help you, till you are able to do it alone. Shall I, Eugenie?"

"Humph! yes—no—as you please;—I don't know myself," stammered she winding my hair around her finger. "But you would be glad to leave it, I should torment you so," added she in her merry way.

"Well, we will run the risk of that; shall I come to-morrow morning?"

"No, I will not have it; it is improper, and you are clever enough without that!" cried she, carelessly throwing herself again into the easy-chair. I said no more about it, for to urge her would have been very unwise. The next morning when auntie and I entered the breakfast room, Eugenie sat already at the table, and in reply to our questioning looks, said gaily—

"I am bored to death with my solitary chocolate; I will breakfast with you. Daisy shall give her assistance to others; I do not need it. I dressed myself alone to-day; only see if I did not do it well"

Of course we overwhelmed her with praises; but she would not listen to them, for in feigned displeasure, she put her hands over her ears.

Such little scenes occurred almost every day, and angry as we too often were with the thoughtless girl, we were soon appeased by her good, affectionate behavior. This wonderful creature possessed a treasure of great worth; and who did not lose patience could awaken much good in her. Aunt Ulrike was just the person for that, as the thoughtless Eugenie felt herself; and she soon, in her way, became quite as fond of this excellent woman as I was. I was greatly rejoiced that I soon possessed

the good will and affection of Eugenie to a greater degree than I had ever hoped; and I soon loved that charming, lively girl with my whole soul, in spite of all that I was obliged to endure at her hands.

But how much had we to bear before Eugenie became somewhat more reasonable. I was especially the victim of her roguish pranks, but she always knew how to make all good again if she had grieved or vexed me.

One day I went to my work table by the window to arrange the climbing plant which hung over it; and wishing to offer my daily greeting to my dear Marie's picture, I put aside the ivy leaves that I might see it better.

But shocked, I started back, and with trembling hands took up the beloved treasure. No, I was not mistaken. Some wicked, mischievous hand had spoiled the picture upon which my heart hung. A heavy black beard adorned the lips, and disfigured the face of the fair, beautiful blonde. It was too provoking, too unkind, and yet I could not forbear laughing at the strange look.

That Eugenie had done it was beyond all question, for she had often ridiculed the little oil picture that I considered quite lovely; but she said "it looked like the picture of a knight's daughter painted on the bowl of a laborer's pipe."

I took the poor picture quietly from the wall, and laid it in a box. Scold that thoughtless girl I could not—I was too deeply hurt for that; but that I was grieved, Eugenie saw by my eyes, red with weeping, and the little empty space on the wall over my work table, which I did not cover by another picture. I soon learned that auntie had talked very seriously with her about this heartless joke, and I much pre-

ferred that to talking with her myself.

How astonished I was one morning to find a picture of my Marie in the empty place, quite delicately and skillfully painted in water colors, and far prettier than the spoiled one. The fresh color and the sweet expression were so faithfully represented, that I pressed the dear picture to my lips, and was quite beside myself with joy. Who had done it? could Eugenie? But no; that was a little work of art, and even if she understood it when had she done it? And yet it was so like her! But she herself would never confess it, if only to tease me.

Then came the original of the picture herself, my dear good Marie. Joyously I flew to meet her, and asked who had painted the picture.

"Why, Eugenie; how could you doubt it?" said Marie. "She came secretly several times to me to paint it." "The old one is a monster," said she, "and I have intentionally spoiled it that I might paint another, or she would never have taken it from the wall, and it always made me angry."

That was just like her, but I dared not thank her for it, lest she should again paint a black beard on the dear little face. Now it first occurred to me that she had gone out alone on several mornings, as she said "to attend to many things." She had then painted this little picture. What talent she had! Music, painting—she excelled in both, but one dared not speak of it, or praise her; she gave her teacher the credit for all that she could do, and apparently considered nothing due to her own talents.

Eugenie especially delighted in laughing at my simple, country attire, which certainly strongly contrasted with the elegant toilet of my spoiled cousin

"Neat and pretty" was my good mother's principle in purchasing new clothing; but the new styles were long in reaching our far-away, pleasant country village, so that I must have appeared rather old-fashioned when I came to my aunt's, for she had at once made all sorts of alterations in my clothing, so that I thought myself wonderfully stylish and well-dressed, until the elegant Eugenie quite threw me into the shade. But this contrast in our appearance did not trouble me; it suited quite well our different personalities; and in Eugenie's elegant attire I should have been much stiffer and more awkward through fear of spoiling it.

A somewhat gay-colored, clumsily made dress received no favor in her eyes, and gave constant ground for her raillery. But the material of the dress was fine and good, the dress still new and pretty, so I continued to wear it in spite of her laughter.

"It smells of butter and cheese," said Eugenie when she saw me wear it. "For God's sake, don't go out on the street; the cows will mistake you for a flowery meadow, and will graze on you." Or "Grandmother, in what corner of your knitting bag was once hidden the costly stuff of your holiday dress?" "Is your sweetheart named Michel or Peter?" and so on. But as I said, I paid little heed to her talk, and still wore the abused dress.

One day I could find it nowhere. I looked for it in all the closets, but in vain. Then Eugenie appeared and said. "Oh! Daisy, if you are looking for your grand-mother's dress, do not trouble yourself longer; the poor news-carrier has it on now. The old woman begged me to give her a warm dress for the cold weather; but you know mine are all too fine, and not very warm. But

the butter-and-cheese dress of yours is so soft and warm, I thought it must do the old wife good, and gave it to her. You are not angry with me, are you?"

Without waiting for an answer she skipped away. I was struck dumb, and did not know whether she was in jest or earnest. If it were not Eugenie I should have considered it a jest; but she was quite capable of doing as she said, and the empty closet confirmed only too well the truth of her words. That was too much, to give that fine, good dress to such a poor woman for whom something cheaper would answer far better. And that she should so coolly dispose of another's property! Weeping angrily, I went to my room to dress, and to complain to auntie of my ill-usage. But as I went toward my bed, I saw lying upon it a wonderfully pretty, violet-colored dress, of such fine, costly, woolen stuff that I stopped, full of admiration, and looked at it.

"Well, I hope it pleases you little Daisy," cried Eugenie, looking in at the door. "The dressmaker said she had your measure."

"Is that for me?" I asked in astonishment, taking up the rich garment which was beautifully trimmed with velvet and lace.

"Mamma intended the cloth for a winter dress for me," said Eugenie, shrugging her shoulders, "but I did not like it. Still, I think it much prettier than your holiday dress, so had it made for you, and make you a present of your wedding dress only that I may not die of anger at having to wear it myself. You need not thank me for it. Violets are dreadfully distasteful to me, so I cannot bear their color."

That strange girl knew so well how to turn matters that it was impossible

for one either to thank or scold her, which was just what she wished.

She had her own way, which was the principal thing, and all others must remain silent. Never in my life had I possessed such a beautiful dress; and full of joy I hastened with it to auntie. She received me laughing, and said I ought now to be content. She had talked severely to Eugenie, for she had done very wrong; but for all that I might well be pleased with the change. I thought so too, for with pleasure I saw in auntie's large mirror that I looked tolerably pretty in the grand dress.

"Do you like to help the poor Eugenie?" I asked, encouraged by the affair of the dress; for I had long wished to make my rich cousin acquainted with my poor, whom I visited regularly every week.

"Don't ask such old-maidish questions, Daisy," replied she. "The poor are dreadfully inconvenient people. I can't bear them; so I always give them something quickly when they come to me, and then I am rid of them."

"But that is not right, Eugenie, and you must not continue it. Only think how badly off these poor people are, who often lack the necessaries of life. If we—but what are you doing? What is that?" continued I, looking at Eugenie, who put a black apron on me for a mantle, and made a sort of throne of some chairs.

"If you please, Herr Pastor, the pulpit is ready; continue your preaching there," said she with a solemn bow, devoutly seating herself opposite me. Of course that put an end to my wise talk, as she wished.

"Thou art as wise as thou art beautiful," she was accustomed to say at other times when I could not suppress

my honest opinions on the occasions of her light chattering; and this speech of Titania's in the *Midsummer Night's Dream*, with which she greeted the weaver who had been changed to an ass, was just as equivocal in my case, for I had a very poor opinion of my charms.

Eugenie would never hear my sermons on poverty, neither could she be persuaded to visit with me some poor families to whom I was accustomed to carry something every week;—now money, now clothing, now food or whatever else they seemed at the time to need most.

"It smells so horridly where such people are, that it is impossible to get the odor out of one's clothing. My teacher called the smell 'sour butter,'" said she, giving me money for the poor people, at the same time begging me not to trouble her with them. Of course I did not ask her again; but one day on my return from one of those visits, I could not forbear telling how sad the misery of one of those poor families had made me. The mother was sick, the father without work, and the little children were left to take care of themselves.

As Eugenie appeared scarcely to notice what I said, I was greatly astonished on going some days later to visit the family, to hear that a young lady had been there, and had given them money and other things; had held the smallest boy on her lap, and had put on his neck a little gold chain, "because he was so pretty." I knew the chain well; it was Eugenie's; and she exactly answered to the whole description. But I dared not tell her that I knew of her visit. She knit her brow at the slightest mention of it; and I became silent, expressing my joy and admiration only to my aunt, into whose

eyes the tears came as I told her. "Strange, dear child," said Aunt Ulrike, her heart warming more and more toward her second foster-child, in whom we daily discovered most excellent traits of character.

And that visit was not the only one that Eugenie made. Again and again her kindness and care gladdened the hearts of many poor people; but we dared not ask through whom she learned of them, as it displeased her to be controlled, or to know that she was observed. Aunt Ulrike feared, and not without cause, that Eugenie, in her ignorance and kindness, would do many foolish things in her visits to her poor families; and missing sometimes valuable objects from among her possessions, we were confirmed in our fears. But it would have been no difficult matter to turn her thoughts entirely from the charitable work which she had undertaken. One day she of her own accord spoke of her visits.

"I do not understand, Daisy, where you get money to provide necessities for your poor," said she thoughtfully, on her return from one of her visits; "I shall soon be as poor as a church mouse myself; but if I had ten times as much it would not be sufficient for all those people's needs."

"I believe you do not rightly understand their needs, dear child," said auntie, coming kindly toward us. "Of all that seems absolutely necessary for you and us in our daily life, these poor people need but a small part. We are spoiled, as we ourselves believe; but had we been brought up in such poor families we should need only the hundredth part of what we now consider necessary. Therefore we can do much good with small gifts in poor families, for it is easy to relieve their wants."

"But auntie, I do not find it at all so," replied Eugenie quickly. "I give and give till I have nothing left, but it is as a drop on a hot stone; the people always need something more. For example, a few days ago I visited the family of the journeyman mason, Franke. I found them just at dinner. They sat around a wooden table and all ate out of the same dish. That seemed dreadful to me; but when I saw the spoon with which they ate I was quite shocked, for it was an old, black, half-broken tin one. I asked why they did not use a table-cloth, and each have a plate for himself; but they looked at each other in confusion, for only think! the poor people had not a single table-cloth, no napkins, only two plates, and those of brown clay, and only those abominable tin spoons to eat with! I went directly with Lisette to the town, and bought a lot of plates and dishes, three table-cloths with napkins, and a half dozen silver spoons, all of which I sent to them. And it is always so; the poor people are so often in need of the most necessary things, and how little can I relieve them! At the poor locksmith's, the other day, I found his wife in bed; but instead of a night jacket, she had an old cloth wrapped about her. Night-clothing the poor woman did not possess. Instead of mattresses, she had only a heap of straw, and her three children slept in one and the same bed. I immediately provided mattresses and all kinds of bedding, and gave the wife some neat night-clothing; but such expenditures have quite emptied my purse, and I do not know what to do."

"My good child, allow me to assist you in your difficulty," said auntie, softly stroking Eugenie's cheek. "What you have told me shows your

good heart, but I cannot conceal from you that you are going on in the wrong way to do good to the people. You have by your own words confirmed what I said. You consider things necessary which the poor people do not think at all needful. I am quite convinced that the locksmith's wife will carry the nice night-clothing to a linen draper, and sell it either for money or coarser linen, which is more useful to her; and the table-linen and service at Franke's either lie unused in the closet, or will, without question, be sold with the silver spoons for money."

"But why, auntie? Only think how much the people needed those things, and how glad they will be to have a table-cloth, to eat from white plates, and to be able to put silver spoons into their mouths instead of the horrid black one," said Eugenie in astonishment.

"No, child, you are mistaken in that," replied auntie laughing. "You think those people had great need of those things because you would need them were you in their place. But they know nothing of them; they have never in their lives eaten differently, and would not know what to do with all the plates, and especially with table-


cloths and napkins. The silver they consider more needful, since it is in the shape of spoons to put in the mouth. For that, their old tin spoon will well serve them, and you must not be angry with them if they have turned that silver into money, with which to buy something to eat with the black tin spoon."

Eugenie became quite thoughtful, for auntie's words gave her a new insight into those things. Half perplexed, and still in her accustomed merry humor, she began to laugh at herself, and in a lovely childlike way begged Aunt Ulrike to advise her in her care of the poor, lest she should provide as necessities of life blonde caps and lace veils, for the women, and gold snuff boxes for the men. Auntie joyfully promised her advice and assistance, and we could now unite with each other in our care of the poor. Eugenie soon employed her time in assisting to make dresses and aprons for the children; and one day we were secretly rejoiced to see in her fair hands a coarse, gray woolen stocking, which she had undertaken to knit for a poor day-laborer, after Lisette had begun it for her.



XII.

VARIETY.

S in my narration, so Eugenie's entrance into our family circle supplanted almost everything; and as I have devoted two whole chapters to this peculiar girl, so in the early part of her stay with us she filled our thoughts almost exclusively. But we gradually fell back into our old quiet ways; Eugenie's strange conduct became the occasion of less troubled and vexatious scenes, and she interested herself more in those things which filled Aunt Ulrike's time. In my lessons she would take no part. She was already surfeited with such things, as she said, and it was not unpleasant to me to be able to go on uninterruptedly with my friend Marie.

The reading aloud which auntie still continued with me, bored her to death, and it was quite difficult for me to read aloud in her presence, as she did not hesitate to laugh at my bad pronunciation and false accent. But auntie forbade such conduct, and for a time she avoided our readings. One day she appeared again, and asked permission to read with us, which of course auntie gladly granted. We had just begun "Gotz von Berlichingen," that noble, powerful work of Goethe's, and I listened with delight as the grand language of the poet fell so expressively from her lips. She read differently from my aunt; there was more of

youthful vigor and a wonderful intonation in her voice, while my aunt read more earnestly, and I must confess more nobly, and I followed her words with more genuine admiration and joy.

Eugenie suddenly appeared to find pleasure in reading aloud, for she participated in it from that time forth, reading in turn with auntie and me; and her raillery at my reading had changed to harmless little jests, which I bore with good grace, and laughed at with her. And so she was. After showing her the right way, one must leave her time for reflection, and her good heart was sure to guide her rightly. It was this conviction which made auntie hopeful and courageous in all anxieties which Eugenie's conduct occasioned; and she was full of thanks to God who had laid this dear being on her heart before the good seed were choked by the luxuriant tares, that had already sprung up and stood so high about her.

Eugenie herself felt this more from day to day, and with infinite naivete she often expressed these thoughts herself, in her own peculiar way, which lent her words an additional charm.

"Auntie, which of us two infants really makes you more trouble, Daisy the little cub, or Eugenie the pattern of modesty and virtue? Only confess; the second child is the greater plague of the two. But what can I, poor little beetle do, that must wallow so long in

the slough before I can find solid earth? But I shall gradually improve like our old cat at home, that in her old age will catch no mice, probably because an Aunt Ulrike has whispered in her ear that it is a sin. Bah! if mamma should see me now, knitting these long, gray stockings, or kissing the dirty little beggar children, she would have me taken to the old women's home, for which she would declare me fit."

Then laughing heartily, she whirled me around with her, and it was impossible for me to be angry with her.

But notwithstanding her fine education, there were many things for which Aunt Ulrike censured her, and which I treasured up for my own consideration. For instance, she took great pleasure in looking out of the window and making remarks upon the passers-by on the crowded street. It amused me also not a little, and we leaned with heads and shoulders far out of the window, in order to see well all that passed. Once auntie came to us and chid our improper conduct. She was much displeased that we knew no better, and to lean so far out was a proof of little culture, she said. I drew back like a whipped spaniel, but Eugenie laughed as usual, and said auntie feared that some one would storm the castle and carry away the beauties she held imprisoned there, and so wished to conceal them from the eyes of the world. Still, she did as auntie bade her, and from that time forth we seldom stood at the open window.

Another bad habit of Eugenie's was the use of strong expressions and improper words, a practice of which I was seldom guilty. It was really ludicrous to hear curses and rude exclamations fall from the lovely lips of the fine young lady.

"I am half boy, how can I help it?" she would say when reprov'd by auntie; still we heard such expressions as "thunder," "damned," "infernal," and the like, much more seldom than formerly. She also made frequent use of God's name, a habit which is unfortunately quite general. She was constantly saying "Ah! God Jesus!" and "My Heavens!" until auntie earnestly called her attention to it, after which she strove to guard against the use of such expressions, though at first she said, half laughingly, half in earnest, that she would put a plaster over her mouth, for she could speak properly to no one.

I, on my part, spoke carelessly, clipping my words, and so on, a fault that very many people, both old and young, shared with me. Eugenie declared that she would complain of auntie for not giving me enough to eat, so that I was obliged greedily to devour the last letters of my words. So each had her faults to correct, and it was well if through the mote in the other's eye, she did not forget the beam in her own.

People who have contracted bad habits are often careless of their obligations to others. So it was with Eugenie, who was quite indifferent as to whether others had a right to expect any consideration of her or not.

"Let me alone! I cannot endure company manners," was her invariable reply when reminded by our aunt that she owed this or that lady a visit. "All people are the same to me; I don't want them to trouble themselves about me." But at last she resolved to cancel these obligations, and with the most engaging manners in the world, she delighted everybody. Auntie, was on her part, very particular and conscientious concerning the demands of society;

for said she, "Who accustoms himself to consider others in little things, will not be unmindful of his fellow-creatures in large ones."

These inattentions to others also made Eugenie careless in the care of articles belonging to them, and her carelessness often caused her much vexation. The dog soiled a beautiful shawl that a lady had lent her to wear home; and one day the oil from an overturned lamp ran over upon a very beautiful album of Amanda's, spoiling not only some very fine drawings, but also auntie's sofa. Eugenie replaced the drawings and also the sofa cover by others that were still better, but it cost her much trouble and expense that she could have saved herself. She was just as careless with books that were lent to her, and auntie told her she need not be surprised if people would not entrust her with their books, since she never returned them without corners turned down, or soiled or tumbled leaves. "It is a sign of little culture, my child," concluded auntie earnestly. Eugenie listened carelessly, but still she became more mindful of her obligations to others, and took better care of their property.

But she remained quite as careless of her own things, and auntie had much trouble to make her understand how wrong it was. The idea of being careful in regard to her own affairs was quite new to her; and being as careless as inexperienced in spending her money, auntie was heartily glad when she gave up to her the direction of her expenditures. Under aunt Ulrike's direction she soon learned better to regulate them; but in spite of all that, she was still disposed to spend more than she possessed. "I must marry a rich man," she often said, and it certainly appeared to me that she was not very wrong.

But if she should marry a poor one, what then?

"I will not marry one. I would rather have none at all," she replied to this question.

Eugenie's carelessness extended also to her correspondence, and that I could not at all understand. I considered my letters my dearest treasures, keeping them under lock and key; and it was only in the strictest confidence that I ever permitted any one to glance at them.

Eugenie, on the contrary, appeared to place no value upon hers; for they often lay about on the table for days, and she frequently used them as wrappers for all possible things, or twisted them up for curl papers for her beautiful brown hair.

To be sure, there appeared to be little enough worth preserving in the letters that she received from her mother, as well as in those from some of her acquaintances, and she very seldom received news from her father. Only these few letters locked up carefully in her portfolio, and for a while after receiving them she was always more serious and thoughtful than usual. In this connection, I remember quite distinctly one incident which showed clearly her deep, tender feeling.

I had waited with indescribable longing for the arrival of a letter from home, and with loud exclamations of joy ran to meet the postman who brought the dear stranger. There was a letter from my mother, whose true loving words so deeply affected me, that the tears rolled down my cheeks; and filled with deepest love, I kissed again and again the dear writing.

Eugenie had quietly watched me. She, too, had that morning received a letter from her mother, but as usual,

she laid it on the sitting-room table, and did not think of it again.

"Let me read the letter Daisy—do me that favor," said she in her lively way, catching up my mother's letter. I willingly allowed her to take it, and in return she passed me the rose-tinted note that she had received from her mother.

"That will hardly make you cry," said she contemptuously, at the same time.

I went to the window and studied the carelessly written note. It contained only complaints of the bad acting of the new opera singers, and something about the fashions. "The sleeves are worn open again, and the bottom of the skirt is trimmed with narrow ruffles,"—so ran this most important epistle. "Do not neglect to have your dresses altered; you will need a new seamstress, but I will attend to that, so that you may not go about dressed in the style of the last century. You do not write a word about the styles there, and yet you understand how much I wish to know about those things; for if I find anything that pleases me I shall certainly wear it. You know how often I have taken the lead in the fashions, and what a sensation I have created. The gilt flowers on my red velvet head-dress of last season quite excited the envy of the ladies here. I hope you will in no wise neglect the preservation of your beauty. I cannot sufficiently enjoin this upon you. Never forget to use the drops for the sweet breath; bathe every evening in almond-milk, for which I send you a new recipe; it will make the skin fresh. Never eat too hot or too cold food, as the enamel of the teeth cannot bear it." So she wrote, and the letter was at an end. On the margin was written, "Papa is well. His

letters are dreadfully tedious. Write me what the latest styles are—whether feathers or flowers are worn on the autumn hats. High boots are again very stylish."

I was so much surprised and so indignant at the contents of this letter, that quite absorbed, I did not know when Eugenie left the room. She appeared to have taken my letter with her. I waited for a while, but at last went to her room to see where she was.

"You cannot go in Fraulein Gretchen; that gracious miss has bolted her door," said Lisette in perplexity as I was about to grasp the door knob. So I went back and waited. After a while Aunt Ulrike, much agitated, came into the room and gave me my mother's letter.

"Have you been with Eugenie, auntie?" I asked quickly.

"Yes child; why?"

"Because she had locked herself in. What is the matter?"

"That poor child is deeply affected by your mother's letter," said she, tears trembling on her eyelids. "She allowed me at my request to enter her room, and I found her in tears, your mother's letter near her."

"O auntie! auntie!" she cried, throwing her arms about my neck, "what a mother I have!" She could say no more. It was the first time that she had realized the empty worthlessness of her mother in comparison with the nobleness of yours, and that poor child was deeply agitated. I let her weep quietly for a while, and then reminded her that she still had much in her good father."


"Yes, my papa, my own dear papa! If I had not him what would become of me?" sobbed she. "But I can be with him so little; he is always so over-

whelmed with business, and so much out of humor on account of mamma's peevishness; and now, ah! now he is so far, so far away, and I have no one in the world who loves me as Gretchen's mother loves her child.' I held the poor girl close to my heart, and after a time she became more calm. 'Yes auntie, you love me, and Gretchen loves me,' said she at last, softly and tenderly, and her happy mood returned again. My words comforted her, and she will soon be as bright and joyous as usual. But you see, my Gretchen, what that poor child has been deprived of, and let us ever hold her doubly dear."

"Yes auntie, that we will," said I deeply moved. I gave auntie the letter from Eugenie's mother which formed such a contrast to that of mine. She could scarcely conceal her indignation as she read it, and more angry than I had often seen her, she threw the letter violently upon the table. "Poor, poor brother," was all she said, and went into her room. I had time to read again and again the letters from the loved ones at home, and to thank the good God who had made me so happy in the love of my friends.

XIII.

THE BALL.

OW children, to-day I bring you an invitation that will give you joy," said Aunt Ulrike one morning taking from her pocket an invitation to a ball to be given in a public place the next Monday, in honor of the king's birthday.

"Thank God! so people dance here, do they? I thought I should quite forget how," cried Eugenie, delighted, turning a neat pirouette. "My ball dresses are certainly half decayed, it is so long since they have seen lamplight. Daisy, what will you wear? I give you your choice, and tell you as Abraham did Lot. 'If you go to the right, I shall go to the left!' Will you wear white, red,

blue, or what? We will not dress alike, as twins or inseparables."

I sat quite still, the hot blood coursing through my veins. I scarcely heard Eugenie's question. A ball! I should go to a ball! I had already been several times with Aunt Ulrike into large companies, but to a ball! That was quite another thing. I had never entered a ball-room in my life, and my heart trembled and quaked with fear, anxiety, and expectation. At last auntie noticed my agitation and gently stroked my hair.

"I really believe you have the ball fever already, little one," said she. "Only wait until your ball dress is

ready. It is not a matter of life and death; calm yourself."

Eugenie's raillery at my faint-heartedness was inexhaustible. Having been accustomed from a child to the most brilliant society, the ball-room was to her a most familiar place, and never excited her fear and anxiety. I now frequently found her in close conference with Lisette, who was so buried under gauze, flowers and ribbons, that only her head appeared above all the splendor, like a ship at sea.

Eugenie never allowed me to remain in their company. I no sooner entered the door than she bombarded me with the most costly flowers and ornaments, or wrapping me in thick folds of gauze and crape, pushed me out of the room.

My own ball-toilet gave me also much to do; for though Aunt Ulrike had generously given me the beautiful material for it, yet I must with my own hands prepare my costume; for as auntie said, what one makes herself is doubly valuable.

To my great joy my dress was at last finished, but I knew not what flowers to wear in my hair. Auntie gave me my choice, but I could not possibly decide, and Marie whose advice and assistance I asked, was sick and could not accompany me to make my purchase.

One morning the servant brought me a box, saying "there was the wreath I had ordered." Not having ordered one I would not at first take it; but my name was on the wrapper, and wondering, I opened the box. But what did I find there? A thick wreath of fresh blooming daisies, as the children had bound them together in the fields. A card was attached to it on which was written these words:

"I give, with greatest pleasure,
You to yourself again."

That was another of Eugenie's practical jokes. Where those fresh field flowers came from so late in autumn, I could not understand; however that was nothing to me. It was just like Eugenie, still it vexed me much. I threw the wreath angrily into the box again, but the paper moving, I saw green leaves under it. I took out the stiff paper, and before me lay the most charming wreath that ever adorned a milliner's shop. Delicate apple blossoms, the leaves just tinged with red, red buds and bright green leaves appearing between them, were woven into a most lovely wreath.

So that was the rogue's choice. There was no doubt that she had selected the wreath for me. Full of joy I was going with my flowers to auntie when Eugenie entered the room, and running to her I threw my arms about her neck. But quickly putting her handkerchief before her face she cried, "Whew! I smell sentimental meadow perfume, just like daisies!" and hastened from the room.

So I came into possession of the most beautiful wreath of flowers, without being obliged to trouble myself about it. The flowers and my white tulle dress looked as pretty to me as if little Snow White herself were to dance in them. I had also sash, white satin shoes, and whatever else belonged with the beautiful things.

Aunt Ulrike had promised to superintend my dressing, and I now looked forward more quietly to the momentous Monday. The beautiful dress had really removed all my fear and anxiety.

"Everything neat and clean, Gretchen," said my aunt, as she came to dress the little ball lady; and all that I put on, from the smallest piece of linen, must be newly washed and clean; and

above all, she declared a dark petticoat to be improper for a ball. As at last I stood before the glass and saw myself in the fine white dress and beautiful wreath, I was astonished, and thought no lady at the ball could be more richly and beautifully dressed.

But see; the door opens, and a fairy floats in—so at least I thought in the first moment, till I recognized our beautiful Eugenie. Enveloped in soft rose-colored gauze, which was caught with fresh white camelias to a rose-colored silk skirt, a wreath of white camelias, between which diamonds glistened, on her brown curls—so floated the elegant figure in to us. I was quite fascinated with her beauty.

“Ah! there is our Daisy looking as if freshly gathered in the field—white leaves with pink tips,” cried she hastening to me. “How pretty she is to-day; she will turn the heads of all the butterflies.”

Laughing, she struck me on the shoulder with her costly fan; then throwing a package of new gloves down upon the table, she began to tumble them about, trying on pair after pair. It was long before she appeared to be satisfied; and in her impatience she pulled so hastily at the fine white kid, that she threw more than one pair aside torn.

I looked at her in astonishment. The pair of gloves that auntie had bought for me to wear were placed carefully beside my fine handkerchief, and waited only to be drawn still more carefully over my fingers. It was dreadful to me to think of tearing them, for I had no second pair. As I expressed my thoughts to Eugenie, she laughingly pushed the package toward me for me to choose from. That one could be

economical in such little things was as new as incomprehensible to her.

At last came the carriage to take Aunt Ulrike and her two foster children to the ball. I clung closely to auntie's hand as the ball-room door opened, and like a sea the light, airy ball dresses moved about me. All the ball fever that I had kept back till now, came over me again; and when some radiant, perfumed young ladies came to be introduced to me, I would like to have crawled into auntie's pocket.

But O rapture! now heaven itself opens; for veiled in the color of the ether, a wreath of white roses in her blonde curls, came my friend Marie to me, and in her hands I could breathe again—now I was saved! True, the first sound of the dance music caused a slight trembling in my limbs, but that soon passed away, and the delight of the dance drove away all thoughts of other things.

I gladly received a dance card upon which I marked all dances as I was engaged for them. I had not the prospect of playing wall flower, while all others around me were dancing. I could not understand myself the feeling of rapture that took possession of me as we were carried along in the mazes of the dance. It was indistinguishably pleasant to move to the sound of the music, and I danced with true delight.

“O, you dear sixteen-year innocence!” laughed Eugenie, as during a pause in the dance I hastened to her and expressed my delight. “Truly, I could envy you, you dance on so joyfully, while others are glad to stop to breathe.”

Eugenie was, beyond all question, the most beautiful lady there; the most beautiful in person, and the most ele-

gantly dressed. The ball-room was just the place in which to show her beauty and gracefulness to advantage, and it seemed to me quite natural that she should be surrounded by many young gentlemen, each striving to pay her the greatest homage. In her place I should have been anxious and uneasy, but she appeared to be quite indifferent to it all, and I noticed with astonishment that she several times turned her back to her admirers, and walked away with one or another of the old ladies.

"Yes, she is a strange girl," said Marie. "My brother paid his court to her, like all the other gentlemen; but she either gives them pointed answers and slips from them like an eel from the hand, or laughs and jests and turns her back upon them. Louise von Meinigen just told me a pretty story about her, which will amuse you too. Only hear, Gretchen. Lieutenant Schmettau, at whom everybody laughs on account of his stupidity, stood near Eugenie, and poured such silly flatteries into her ear that she impatiently bit her fan and looked all about the room. At last she looked attentively toward the niche where we two, you and I, stood laughing and chatting together. She, too, laughed instinctively, so her sweet gallant considered it his duty to laugh and look at us. Eugenie angrily turned her back to him, and leaning toward Louise Meinigen, and pointing lightly toward us, said, 'See, Louise, the violets peep and prattle!'"

"—'And shoot up toward the stars!' suddenly snarled some one near Eugenie, and with a low bow Lieutenant Schmettau again stood laughing before her, twisting his red beard. That quite exhausted the patience of our beautiful Eugenie. She looked indignantly at

the meddling prattler, and throwing her head back, said sharply,

'The lieutenant jumps up and listens,
Exactly like the gazelle.'

Then making a proud bow, she took Louise's arm to go to another room."

I was amused at the story; but feared, and not without reason, that the proud Eugenie would in this way gain much ill-will. She would certainly never tell what sharp retorts she might receive, or however else she might be vexed; but once during a cotillion she contemptuously threw to me a most beautiful bouquet that she had received during the dance, and laughing, gave me a little paper that lay among the flowers, upon which was written:—

"Your little tongue stings,
As every one sings:
I like you not!"

Shocked, I looked up at her, thinking how much this satire must anger her, but she looked roguishly at me and said, "I am happily rid of him, am I not, Daisy?" "But find other admirers; it is hardly flattering to you to be sung in this way."

Just then her glance fell upon Dr. Hausmann who had danced often with me, and now came to present to me one of the beautiful bouquets that were given to the ladies in the cotillion.

"He is a friend of my good papa's," said I embarrassed, following Eugenie's glance, but I felt that I blushed deeply.

"Ah, so? I beg pardon; I thought the flowers were for you, not for your father. But you must certainly know better about that, Daisy," said Eugenie laughing and tapping my fingers with her fan. Then nodding gaily to me she again joined the dancers.

A cotillion is a wonderful dance. Equal to its continuance is the agitation in which it places the dancers, for here expression can be given to all feelings

of affection and good will, as well as of dislike and aversion. Here not only the gentlemen, as is the custom in life, but also the ladies have the privilege of sounding the key-note of the affections. The ladies received as I have said, lovely bouquets, and the gentlemen little badges. I had already received several bouquets, and was quite proud and happy. But now I must make a choice, and to whom would I rather give my badge than to my father's friend, the dear Dr. Hausmann? He had shown a preference for me by inviting me to dance so frequently, and it would be only an expression of gratitude for me to give him the order. Still, my heart beat fast as if I were prompted by a deeper feeling. I glanced anxiously toward Eugenie and was heartily glad that she did not notice to whom I gave it.

It was late when we returned home, auntie thoroughly tired, for it was no small duty to be ball-mother, Eugenie as usual full of jest and merriment, but I intoxicated with pleasure. I had never before been so happy. For a long time I lay awake reviewing in my mind all the experiences of the evening. It seemed to me that to-day the backfischchen had behaved uncommonly well. No warning shake of auntie's head flooded as with a cold bath my glowing soul. I was quite content with all that I had said and done. At last I slept sweetly, and in my dreams still floated gaily about in the dance.

"Listen, Daisy, I will give you dancing lessons," said Eugenie the next morning when I entered her room. I found her still in bed, although I, on account of the ball had slept late enough.

"Do I dance so badly, Eugenie?"

cried I terrified, for I thought I had danced very well.

"Exactly like mamma's lap dog, when I stand him on his hind legs," replied she lightly, yawning and stretching.

I blushed deeply, and much hurt, pressed my lips tightly together. Eugenie closed her eyes, and appearing to take no more notice of me, I was about to go angrily away, when she said half aloud,

"My little tongue stings
As Gretchen sings."—

"A pretty song, is it not Daisy?" and raised herself in bed. "So profound! The words can so readily be changed to make it apply to other things! Yes, such a lieutenant!—it is a pride! It is impossible to believe what a depth of soul and humor is hidden beneath that uniform?"

"But all are certainly not like him, Eugenie," replied I somewhat propitiated, for it was evidently her desire to restore me to good humor. "I have met some very pleasant young officers; but there are certainly insipid fops enough among other people."

"I believe you prefer professional to military men, little one," said Eugenie with sparkling eyes. "Your ball order was very becoming to the handsome Dr. Hausmann."

The blood rushed to my cheeks. Then she had seen to whom I gave it. "He danced so much with me that I was obliged to show my gratitude," said I somewhat embarrassed.

Eugenie's hearty laughter restored me somewhat to myself. She was greatly amused at the idea of rewarding a gentleman for the honor he did me by dancing with me. Her ideas of all things were so different from mine, that I was sometimes quite out of humor

with her. My feelings were much more in harmony with those of my friend Marie. She regarded the world much as I did, was as humble and coy as I; but Eugenie laughed at our "green simplicity" as she called it. She demanded much, and nature had given her rich means through which to acquire much. But for me, modest girl, modest pretensions in world and men were better suited, and in this respect I did not allow myself to be led away by Eugenie.

I was angry because she laughed at my dancing; but I concealed my anger knowing that in her heart she meant well, and said, "Honestly, Eugenie, do I really dance so badly?"

"Well, your gracefulness lies only in your clothes, little one," laughed she good naturedly. "But do not worry. Aunt Deportment was quite content with you and your conduct, so do not pull out your black hair in despair. I would like to give you a few lessons, that cannot do you any harm;—you, as well as your little Marie, for she leans much too far back, as you too far for-


ward, so that your bodies form a sharp angle when you dance near each other. And then you both take so heavenly classical steps, exactly as if the dancing-master stood behind you, and for every mistake struck you on the toes with his fiddle-bow."

Gladly I followed the instructions which Eugenie that same morning gave me for the better management of my feet and hands; and Marie, too, allowed herself to be taken possession of when she came to talk with us of the ball. Truly, Eugenie was a wonderful teacher, and made infinite fun of our movements; but we learned what she wished—to move more unconcernedly in the dance, and to stand erect. She also taught us to bow gracefully. Aunt Ulrike also played the part of teacher for us all, and urged us to turn our backs as little as possible to the guests, especially those to whom the highest consideration and greatest politeness are due. But I honestly confess that to this day I find it extremely difficult.



XIV.

MEETING.

 THIS first ball was followed in the course of the winter by several others, so that I gradually overcame my bashfulness, and auntie praised me for being more free and easy in my manners than she had ever hoped. Near Eugenie I still appeared like a wooden doll, but her gracefulness was unattainable for me.

But before I relate anything more of our life together, I must mention an event that was, in its consequences, very important, trifling as it at first appeared.

A poor woman came, frequently to Aunt Ulrike's to sell eggs, vegetables or fruit, the products of her small farm, and who was well paid by auntie. The poor woman was taken sick; and auntie wishing to assure herself of her condition, availed herself of one of the most beautiful days of late autumn to go with us to the village where the woman lived. All was as it had been represented to us; we found her in great need, and our good aunt at once set herself at work with the children, after having sent us away, for she well knew that Eugenie could not stay there long.

So we two went to walk in the meadows and fields, gathering the few flowers that the frost had spared, and delighting in the beautiful misty-blue coloring which decked the woods and distant horizon.

On the edge of the wood we saw a beautiful castle-like building, sur-

rounded by beautiful grounds; and in order to see this country-seat better, we crossed a meadow where many cattle were eating the last remains of grass and weeds. I had been about among the animals so much from my childhood that I had no fear of them; but Eugenie looked anxiously at them, and her sportiveness was laid aside. Soon I, too, became attentive, for a dull bellow told me that the bull was with the herd, and I well knew that he was not to be trifled with. I looked about for the shepherd, but he was nowhere to be seen, so I walked quickly forward lest I should betray my fear to Eugenie, for at a distance I saw the animal, his head lowered, approaching us. Eugenie now noticed the approach of the enemy, and crying "The bull! the bull!" ran quickly forward. It now occurred to me that her red shawl had attracted him, but I could not reach her, and hastened breathless, after her. Now our pursuer fell into a trot, and was soon so near her that she cried frantically for help, and I, filled with anxiety, rushed forward to her assistance, although I knew that my strength was far too feeble for me to help her.

At the last dreadful moment, as the beast lowered his head to catch her on his horns, a heavy blow fell upon his broad forehead, and stunned, he passed to the side. Reeling, he struck his horns so forcibly into a large stump that he fell as if fettered, and bellowing loudly, rolled upon the ground.

A tall, manly form now hastened from the enraged animal to Eugenie, who sank powerless to the earth as soon as she saw herself freed from her raging pursuer. I, too, was soon at her side to assist her, for fright and anxiety had deprived her of all strength. I turned thankfully toward her deliverer, who had so powerfully aided us in the last moment; but as soon as he saw that Eugenie was provided for, he had hastened back to the bull, and with the help of the shepherd, who had now appeared, he freed his horns from the stump, and bound one of his fore feet to his head so that he could do no more harm.

Soon he came again to us, but how great was my surprise when I saw Baron Senft! I blushed deeply, and in my embarrassment could scarcely express my thanks, and he too was visibly surprised and confused. But Eugenie, who had quickly recovered herself, released us from the painful situation. With fervent thanks she gave the Baron her hand, and earnestly begged him to accompany us to Aunt Ulrike, that she might become acquainted with this noble man who had saved her life.

The Baron knew not what to say or do. He glanced quickly at me, and all my embarrassment having disappeared, I added my request to Eugenie's, and he accompanied us to the peasant's house, before which stood Aunt Ulrike waiting for us, and who was quite as much surprised at the account of our adventure as at meeting our old acquaintance. But here, in the free open air, surrounded by only a few cheerful persons, the Baron was quite another man. His stiff, embarrassed manner, which in the brilliant saloon, among so many elegant people, struck one as being so comical, was now scarcely noticeable.

The hunter's dress that he wore was very becoming to him, and the daring and strength with which he overcame Eugenie's pursuer, had shown him in all his strength and manliness. He asked us to do him the honor to accompany him to his castle, and with pleasure we accepted his invitation. A beautiful old building, surrounded by a magnificent park and fine out-buildings, lay before us. The interior of the castle was simple but beautiful, and all betokened nobility and prosperity.

I felt very strangely as I walked through these rooms. I might have called all this mine: I might have been mistress of all these rich possessions! These thoughts constantly obtruded themselves upon me. I saw them also written in Aunt Ulrike's face, and might perhaps have read them in the Baron's eyes, had we had the courage to look at each other. But singularly enough, instead of being saddened by those thoughts, or feeling regret at my foolishness, I felt on the contrary how utterly impossible it would have been for me to grant the Baron's wish, even were his castle ten times more beautiful and costly.

It gave our host great pleasure to show us everything; and our sincere admiration of the many costly antiquities in which the castle was so rich, pleased him so much that he was quite lively and talkative. Eugenie was full of enthusiasm as she looked at the rich, old-fashioned things, and she found abundant material to call forth her great love of the beautiful. She ran and skipped about everywhere, opened a the secret doors, peeped into all the little corners of which that old castle had a whole treasure, and was as charming and joyous as an escaped child. The fright that had at first made her pa

and weak had apparently passed away, and the delicate red of her cheeks made her more beautiful than ever. The Baron followed her continually, and she was so cordial and unembarrassed that he cast aside all reserve, and ran and scrambled about with her wherever she pleased. Auntie could not follow so quickly, and I remained behind with her. Eugenie finally reached a little room up in the tower, where she saw to her astonishment all kinds of musical instruments and high piles of notes. There was a violoncello that was especially beautiful, and a costly piano excited her greatest admiration.

"You are musical, Herr Baron?" cried she quickly, pointing to an open music book on the violoncello.

"A little, gracious miss. But let us leave this," replied our host, confused, wishing to lead her from the room, for her entrance there was very annoying to him. But Eugenie skipped gaily toward the piano, and running her fingers over the keys nodded gaily to him.

"You will not drive me from here," cried she joyfully. "Only come, dearest Baron, accompany me. You play the violoncello; that is glorious. How long it is since I heard that dear, dear instrument! We can certainly find something among your notes that we can play together."

The poor Baron was helpless. Here in his tower-room, where he was as secure as in a hidden sanctuary, and of which no one had any knowledge, here had the gay, roguish Eugenie entered, and we found our good Baron engaged with her in playing most delightfully, as following the sounds, we again came up with them. He played his violoncello in a masterly manner, and it was a great pleasure to listen to the finished playing of the two. We remained at a

little distance in order not to disturb them; but the Baron was so heart and soul in the music, that the whole world might have listened, it would not have disturbed him.

Only too unwillingly we left that little room, but the sun was near his setting, and warned us to return home. We parted from the Baron as if we had long been the best of friends, and he even gave us his promise to visit us as soon as he came to town. But he did not often go there, for at his beautiful home he felt infinitely happier than among the active townspeople. I had not seen him in company since those fatal days, for which I had, of course, been very sorry.

I was greatly astonished to hear with how much respect, yes, even admiration, Eugenie spoke of the Baron. She was quite changed. Her keen sense of the ridiculous, which generally spared no one, had always found rich material for her sport. The Baron had shown himself a good subject for her ridicule. All sorts of strange thoughts passed through my mind, but I wisely kept them to myself, and was very careful to be silent in regard to our future relations with our preserver. I spoke my mind quite freely only to Marie; she was my confidant in all things.

Only a few days after our adventure we were startled by the news that a fire had broken out in the village where Baron Senft's possessions lay, and that many peasant houses, the parsonage and school house, as well as a part of the church had been burned. We regretted the misfortune the more that we had just been in the village, and we contributed liberally for the benefit of the sufferers. Fortunately our poor, sick peasant woman was spared this misfortune, but fright and anxiety had

greatly increased her suffering. Through her we learned how self-sacrificing Baron Senft had been, how active in extinguishing the fire, and that he had afforded relief to all.

Eugenie took unusually active interest in this event, and earnestly considered how the poor people might be helped. A little lottery that Marie proposed for this purpose was hardly to her liking, although she furnished very beautiful articles for it.

"We will arrange an amateur concert," exclaimed she at last; "we shall profit more by that than by your pin-cushion lottery, with your penny chances. Or what do you think of a little dramatic performance? My opinion is that it will please the people; and we must, of course, have tickets with reserved seats." Our fears that such things were impracticable and would make too much trouble, she cast aside; and as Aunt Ulrike offered no objection, since it was for a good purpose, Eugenie was firm in her resolution to arrange a little comedy, which should be preceded by a musical performance.

The generally so comfortable, inactive Eugenie was now fire and flame. Theatrical representations belonged to those things of which her mother was especially fond, and had often arranged; and Eugenie having several times taken part in them, had good knowledge of such things. I found her daily in her room surrounded by books, as before the ball by flowers and ribbons, for it was very difficult to select a piece. But she had soon made her selection, and as it afterward proved, a very good one.

Not without great trouble did we succeed in distributing the parts suitably among our acquaintances, and it often needed the greatest patience and

amiability that Eugenie possessed to put them in humor for the play.

At last all the parts were distributed, a suitable hall engaged, in which a neat stage was built, and we now actively set about learning our parts and arranging suitable costumes. The days passed one after another as in a dovecot. We constantly needed assistance. Now a bodice was needed here, now proper trimming there; now we disagreed in regard to the best arrangement of the lights, now in regard to the decorations. Eugenie had a word of advice for all. I admired the skill with which she arranged everything; and how well she understood how to settle all disputes!

Then again we were in doubt in regard to the proper accent of certain words, or the manner of coming upon the stage. In short, each had a different idea, and Eugenie generally knew how to dispose of all, auntie helping her when she could. I lent my assistance in another direction, industriously setting my fingers in motion to put the costumes in order. Through that I learned to work furiously. In spite of all protestations I, too, was condemned by Eugenie to take one of the parts.

"But I am so wooden, I shall disgrace you all," I pleaded.

"I will set you right, Daisy," laughed Eugenie. "You are in the high school here with Aunt Ulrike, and it properly belongs to one's education to learn to take part in a comedy. I am thinking only of your improvement."

Little as I understood of this, as also of the necessary elements of education, I at last yielded, not wishing to appear selfish.

Eugenie's plan to have a little concert before the play gave her much more trouble than the arrangement of the parts

for the play itself. She would herself sing and play, but she must be assisted by others, or it would not succeed. Amanda Delius had finally declared her readiness to play the piano, and Dr. Hausmann would sing a duet with Eugenie; but we needed a kind of overture as an introductory performance.

"I have it! That must succeed!" cried Eugenie to me one morning, showing me a note bearing the address:—"The Rt. Hon. the Baron von Senft Heir to and Lord of Senftenburg."

"Now do not open your eyes as if you were just ready to devour me," said she, ringing the bell. "Carry this letter quickly to the box," she said, giving it to Lisette.

"But Eugenie, what have you done?" I asked in astonishment.

"Bah! I only asked our good Baron to play on the violoncello as his part toward helping the needy villagers," replied she, somewhat disconcerted.

"On the violoncello! Will he assist at our concert? Have you asked him to, Eugenie?"

"Yes, why not? He plays so well why should he not play a trio with Marie's brother and me? I will play the piano, Eduard the violin, and the Baron the violoncello; that will be a good introduction."

I shook my head, thinking the Baron would certainly refuse; but O wonder! on the very next day our brave Baron appeared, somewhat stiff and awkward, it is true, but less so than I had

ever before seen him. What an effort it must have cost him to so far overcome his shyness and reserve we could only guess; but he had overcome it, and now came, full of anxious concern, to learn Eugenie's further wishes. Her face beamed with pleasure and thankfulness, and she was quite delicate in her attentions toward her new friend, who was soon so much absorbed with her in selecting a suitable piece of music, that auntie and I seemed quite superfluous, as before on our visit to Senftenburg Castle.

After the Baron had gone, I could no longer restrain myself, and said quite bravely, "How good it is in the Baron to play with you, Eugenie, for that noble purpose!"


She looked up quickly, but immediately bent down again, and busied herself with her notes. "How! yes, very good," she replied absently. "By the way, Daisy," continued she in her old roguish way, "I had not supposed you to be so hard hearted as to treat this good man so shabbily!"

Now it was my turn to blush and become embarrassed, for it was very unpleasant to me to know that she had heard that story. Eduard must have told her, for auntie and Marie had promised not to mention it. For a wonder, Eugenie did not continue her teasing, and I on my side was well on my guard against provoking her with my roguery again.



XV.

OTHER NEWS.

“ N entertainment for a charitable object,” was printed on the tickets that we issued for our evening’s entertainment. Every seat in the hall was engaged, and a rich sum rewarded us for our trouble. But with what heart beatings did I see the eventful evening arrive! A ball would have been child’s play, a mere trifle to what I must now undergo.—But what availed fears? The evening had come, the bell rang, and slowly rose the curtain that separated the stage from the audience-hall. Low murmurs from the spectators reached us who waited behind the scenes; but soon all was still, and we heard the clear voice of my dear Marie, who made a short introductory address. She asked that the object of our exhibition might suffice as a compensation for our feeble performance, and that on no account should the critic be admitted, having received no ticket of admission.

Loud applause followed her words, and much as I had pitied my friend to whom this difficult task had been assigned, and who must appear first and alone, I now envied her still more, for she had finished, could take off her costume which was very becoming to her, and in quiet witness our acting.

As soon as Marie had finished, the first tones of a trio of Beethoven’s sounded, and the greatest quiet prevailed among the audience. High plants and flowers which Eugenie, full

of consideration for the bashfulness of her violoncello player had had brought in, partially concealed the musicians, and behind this fragrant flower wall the skilled trio performed the piece which called forth a second storm of applause. Then Eugenie sang a beautiful song, and the Baron’s eyes beamed when he again appeared to us behind the scenes, all his senses seemingly concentrated in that of hearing as he listened to her song. He first came to himself when the song was at an end. Amanda followed with a fine concert piece, then a duet sung by Eugenie and Dr. Hausmann closed the musical part of the entertainment.

Now came the dreaded moment—our play was to begin. We gave that charming little comedy of Kotzebue’s, “The Right Way is the Best.” I took the part of a young clergyman’s widow, who was to be disposed of together with the vacated parsonage, and a very gay middle aged lady took the part of the housekeeper, who, to try the applicants, appears as the lady who is to be taken with the parsonage. An old major, to whom was entrusted the appointment of the pastor, was splendidly represented by Dr. Hausmann, with peruke, a long pipe, and painted wrinkles. Two candidates announce themselves, one of whom has many to intercede for him. He at once agrees to the condition that he will marry the old lady, especially as he hears that she has much money. The other candidate has no one to speak

for him, but applies directly to the Major. When it is proposed to him to take the young widow with the parsonage he is inclined to draw back, until he learns that she is an early love of his, on whose account he has never married. Of course he marries her, receives the parsonage, and all ends happily:

My modest role of the widow was lighter than that of the housekeeper, whose appearance excited great mirth. A monstrous cap, full of wrinkles, and a costly, old-fashioned, flowery jacket, added to her affected, self-sufficient manner, gave her an indescribably comical appearance. She played too, exceedingly well.

In spite of my anxiety and apprehension, our play was a success from the beginning; no one hesitated, the prompter did his part well, and all passed off as well as we could wish. At first I was somewhat timid at sight of the large audience, but that soon passed away, and I gained courage as the play went on. We were greatly pleased that we gained so much applause, and Eugenie herself told me that I had done quite well—was quite the little Daisy that a pastor's wife should be.

This comedy was followed by another still better than the first, although there were but two characters in it. It was the little scene of Schneider's: "The Kurmarker and the Picardian," in which Eugenie as a charming French woman, and Eduard in the role of a brave soldier, exceeded all expectations. The pretty French costume was admirably suited to Eugenie's fine figure, and the high Picardian hat was so becoming to the pretty maiden that one could not help falling in love with her. The plot of the play is simple. The pretty French woman, by her grace, dancing and flattery, understands how to win the

good-will of the Prussian, and he on his part wins hers through his kindness, so that they part the best of friends. The well known song,

"O fir tree, O fir tree, how green are thy leaves,"

was sung by Eduard so pathetically that we were all deeply moved, and tears stood in our eyes as the song of the brave soldier choked with the pain of homesickness, ended with sobs. Eugenie's dancing, in contrast with the clumsy jumps of the average German, was quite charming; she won endless applause, and *mon brave* also.

So all was at an end, and that without important interruption. Our performance had met with universal approbation, and we ourselves, in spite of much trouble, found much pleasure in it; and what was far more, to our great joy we were able to put into the Baron's hands a neat little sum for distribution among the poor villagers.

The tumult into which we had all been thrown by our preparations for this evening was now succeeded by the quiet, uniform course of our daily life. The winter, with its long evenings, gathered us generally in auntie's comfortable sitting-room, whose "heavenly old-fashioned furniture" had now become dear even to the gay Eugenie, as had also our pleasant, quiet life. She had never really known anything of such a life, for her mother's was one of endless pleasure, and a quiet domesticity was her especial aversion. Fortunately our Eugenie had a very different nature, and her finer feelings gained more and more the ascendancy over her former thoughtless, worldly inclinations. Still she always remained excessively merry and wayward, and the spoiled child was apparent through all. But one must love her, for she was in spite of all a very dear creature.

Her fine musical talent afforded us much pleasure in the long winter evenings; and encouraged by her, and under her direction, I too, tried little by little to improve myself in singing and piano playing. Marie frequently kept us company. Her brother Eduard and Dr. Hausmann also joined our happy circle that met in auntie's sitting-room. After a time a new member was added—our friend Baron Senft. We never saw him in society, and at first he appeared ill at ease in our little company. But the music soon worked wonders, and Eugenie was so cordial toward him that soon the ice-crust of his reserve melted away, and he took evident pleasure in our society. Dr. Hausmann, who had traveled much, often told us of what he had seen; Eduard, too, well entertained us, and we soon learned how well-informed and cultivated the Baron was, whose knowledge had until now been kept under lock and key, and no one had ever dreamed of the rare gifts of the quiet country nobleman, who now became quite merry and talkative.

Marie shared with me the firm conviction that the Baron was over head and ears in love with Eugenie. One must have been blind not to see it. But what Eugenie thought it was impossible to tell. Her roguish nature made her incomprehensible, and if one attempted to take her unawares, she escaped quickly and adroitly.

It was, however, quite evident that she liked the Baron, strange as it was; the terribly stiff, shy misanthrope pleased our beautiful, elegant, in every respect spoiled Eugenie, better than any other gentleman of our acquaintance. She always defended him, always brought forward whatever was in his favor, and that before all. She never laughed at and ridiculed him, however

much occasion he might give her for it. I now fully realized the truth of auntie's words—"Ridicule is worse than censure. A girl will sooner marry a man in whom she finds much to reproach, than one at whose expense she makes herself merry."

Neither did I laugh any more at our good Baron's peculiarities. I learned to esteem him more and more for his fine character and estimable qualities, and to acknowledge his true worth. I must confess that at first I was not quite at ease with him, and certainly rivaled him in awkwardness, for it is very unpleasant to meet a man to whom one has—given the basket. To my joy the Baron appeared to get over it much more easily. He soon completely ignored me when Eugenie was near; she was the sun toward which he turned; he loved and honored her with his whole heart. He had wished to marry me because he believed I loved him; that was a mistake, and therefore he was released from his obligations to me.

But the poor bashful Baron was very uncomfortable over it! Week after week passed away, already winter was yielding to the warm breath of spring, but still matters remained unchanged; the fear of being refused by Eugenie bound the poor man's tongue. He did not venture to confess to the beautiful girl how dearly he loved her. Did he again err, was she, too, indifferent to him as I had been, his hopes were ruined, and he was deprived of all that could give him joy in life.

These thoughts were so plainly written in his face that I blamed myself again and again for my foolishness, which now bore such bitter fruits. A conversation with Eduard first showed me clearly how right I was in my surmises.

"Fraulein Gretchen, you can do a good deed," said Eduard to me one day when I was with his sister Marie.

"A good deed? For whom?" I asked in astonishment.

"Well for whom else than your former admirer, Baron Senft," replied Eduard.

"He was never my admirer, and has now quite another deity," said I laughing.

"But as you once bitterly undeceived and mortified him, you ought now to do him a favor."

"With all my heart; but how can I?"

"Oh! the ladies understand so well how to bring to the light what is hidden. Will you not sound the heart of your beautiful cousin, that you may know who is the fortunate one on whom she bestows her affection?"

"That is a fearfully difficult task, dear friend! Eugenie sparkles like a humming bird, ever in different colors, and thoroughly penetrates my designs when I make an attempt to draw her out."

"But you would do a good deed, Gretchen," said Eduard, becoming more earnest. "Our poor Baron is almost dying of love for Eugenie, but his experience with you has deprived him of all courage ever again to offer a lady his hand. I offered him, of my own accord, my assistance in the matter, but he earnestly begged me to take no steps for him, for Eugenie's refusal would make him forever unhappy. But what will happen if he never declares himself?"

"Well, I promise to do what I can to fathom Eugenie," said I sighing. "I sincerely believe she returns the Baron's affection, but how far I do not know, she is such a strange girl!"

How difficult was the task that I had undertaken! I tried often to turn our conversation to the Baron, but it availed nothing; I did not gain a step.

For instance, I once said to her, "Do you not think, Eugenie, that the Baron has a very interesting face, especially when absorbed in his music?"

"I think him quite hateful, whether absorbed in his music or not," replied she drily.

"Yes, his manners are not fine, that I must admit," I threw in.

"What of that?" replied she quickly. "So far as I am concerned he may be as stiff as he pleases; I shall never dance with him. In conversation he is not stiff, but that is better than the reverse."

So it was always. Did I criticise, she praised him; if I spoke favorably of him that too was wrong.

"The Baron must be very rich," said I at another time. "But what a pity it is that he should live alone in that fine old castle!"

"Then why did you refuse to keep him company there, if you so much pity him in his loneliness?" laughed Eugenie.

I blushed deeply; but concealing my confusion, said courageously, "There are other girls enough who would like to marry him; don't you believe that?"

"That may be," she replied, twisting her curls around her finger; "but you should not recommend to others a dish of which you are unwilling to eat yourself. O you cruel, artful Daisy! did you think I would fall into your trap?"

Snapping her fingers at me she danced singing away. I was angry at my stupidity through which I had lost more than I had gained.

At last, one day when the Baron had been with us for a long time, I took courage to say earnestly, "Eugenie, I

believe the Baron loves you far better than anyone else, but he has not the courage to tell you so. You should show him more clearly whether you return his affection, that the poor man may know what to do."

Eugenie looked at me for a moment in astonishment, then laughing loudly said, "Has he commissioned you to plead for him, you sympathetic soul? I almost believe so. But little treasure, I will confess to you that I think his choice of a messenger was not happier than that of the crafty friar in 'Nathan'—you need only to change 'So says the patriarch' to 'So says the Herr Baron.' But my Daisy," continued she, seeing that I turned away hurt, "I will consider your wise words. What a pity it is that we do not live in the land of the Amazons where it would be so much easier for the poor Herr Baron! If we could only dance a cotillion together," continued she teasingly, "I could give him an order and show him that he was dearer to me than any one else, could I not, Daisy? To whom did you give your cotillion order at your first ball? Was it Eduard? Ah no; but who was it?"

"Go away! let me alone, you horrid girl," cried I angrily, but yet laughingly. "Go away! I have enough of you."

"That is splendid. Then at last I shall be free from you and your conspiracies," laughed she. "Still, that your heart may not break with pity and grief, I will confess to you that I like the Baron very much indeed. But hasten to inform the others of it, and through them the poor Baron, else he will at last gain courage to ask me himself, and you lose your triumph at having brought the matter about. That would be deplorable! Do you not hear, little treasure?

Run, and see that he hears it! Do you not believe me when I say in so many words 'I love him?' Or why do you stand there staring like a baby?"

Yes, I certainly stood there amazed, for what I, in a round-about way, had been unable to pump out, that strange girl had told me in a few dry words when I least expected it. Joyfully I embraced her, but she could not endure that, and ran scolding away. I went with my news to Marie, and with her to Eduard. As soon as possible he would hasten to the Baron with the joyful tidings, and play the match-maker for his friend. Aunt Ulrike was now let into the secret which she had long before guessed, and she rejoiced at the to-be-hoped-for early union, for which she greatly wished.

"But dear auntie," said I shaking my head as I learned that it had long been the wish of her heart, "do you really think Eugenie loves the solitary well enough to spend her life happily with him? They are so different!"

"That is nothing, my child," replied she laughing. "As I have learned Eugenie better I know that her deep nature will raise this man's great worth far above his peculiarities, which she will not only overlook, but also conceal from others. With all his admiration for her, let her be what she may, she will her life long remain the spoiled child that she now is. In the brilliant position in which the Baron's wealth will place her, the means will not be wanting for the gratification of all her wishes. She may remain as she is if she will always be as good and amiable as she has now become."

I had received Eugenie's confession in the morning, and during the day neither spoke another word concerning it. Eugenie remained in her room, which

was very agreeable to me. In the twilight I saw her go to Aunt Ulrike. At last she came to me in the sitting-room and said, "Daisy, as you are here in the high school and should learn everything, you can now learn how one should conduct herself in the world as a bride."

Not knowing what she meant, I suspected roguery behind her words, and said evasively, "Don't talk such nonsense, Eugenie, it little concerns me."

"It is quite the same to me whether it concerns you or not, little one, if it concerns me," laughed she. "I am not jesting at all, but in sober earnest."

"As for me, such things are very far from my thoughts," replied I tartly.

"No; I maintain that they are very near," said she earnestly. "You think you can learn so much from me. Well, I have added another to my many accomplishments—to conduct myself properly as a bride."

"Eugenie, what! you a bride!" exclaimed I in amazement. "Has the Baron had the courage to declare himself?"

"The Baron? no; who said so?" replied she laughing.

"Well, one must be the first; you have not—" stammered I blushing.

"I? I have done nothing more than to follow the example of my excellent cousin," said she courtesying. "She taught me to bestow orders in order to show the feelings of one's heart. So I sent an order this morning, and in return, as is proper for a gallant cavalier, received a bouquet. That is cotillion rule, is it not, Daisy? There, see, you who understand the language of flowers! You know I am very generous with my communications." With that she drew forth a beautiful bouquet which she had until then kept concealed under the

table cloth, and held it under my nose. Among the flowers appeared a little note which I hastily grasped. It contained only the few words. "Thanks, everlasting thanks for this ray of light in the dark night. Now you are mine, forever mine! A. S."

I was as in a dream. So all was settled, and our interference had been quite unnecessary. Eugenie had snapped her fingers at us, and fearlessly taken the business into her own hands. Only one having such courage and self-confidence as she could have done it. In that she had shown herself to be not unlike an Amazon. But could one blame her? Was not such a step excusable on account of the Baron's extreme bashfulness? yes, even justified? The life-happiness of two persons depended upon a simple word, and as he dared not speak it, why should not she? and thereby open the way for their happiness.

Such thoughts had long occupied Eugenie's mind, and little by little I yielded to them. Still, at the first moment I was greatly surprised at this new form of betrothal, for I, with my shy nature, could never have taken such a step, even had my whole life's happiness depended upon it. But it would be impossible to find two more unlike than Eugenie and I, as we both quite frankly admitted.

A half hour after my conversation with Eugenie some one ran up the steps, and never in my life have I seen such a change in a man as in our dear Baron! His face beamed with happiness and love. He behaved like a boy. He swam in a sea of happiness, and Eugenie was so affectionate, so modest, and withal so roguish, merry and tender, that she was quite a study. She was just my ideal of a beautiful, happy bride,

XVI.

THE BRIDE.

“**B**EFORE a girl is engaged or married, one cannot know what is in her,” Aunt Ulrike had sometimes said, and I now realized the truth of her words. Eugenie, that variable being, revealed as a bride quite new and unexpected qualities, which excited our genuine admiration. She was really in earnest in her endeavors to improve. Until now she had shown little consideration for others—had paid no attention to any one else; she had never asked whether this or that inconvenienced or injured any one; all difficulties were obviated for her, all was done for her. But now she was thoughtful of all that would be agreeable to the Baron, and with charming delicacy sought to remove all that would annoy him on account of his bashfulness. What seemed to trouble him most were visits that the bridal pair must make among their friends. This she could not of course spare him, and not having been present I do not know how stiff and awkward he appeared on those occasions; but on their return I saw with what fine tact Eugenie always came to his aid—how well she understood how to draw him into conversation—just at the right moment to take his arm—remove all things that embarrassed him, such as chairs, light tables, flower vases, and all such light things that are easily overturned, and which so often trouble awkward people. And she was always so unembarrassed, so cheerful, so

amiable, that I well understood why the eyes of her bridegroom rested only on her, and the whole outside world had for him no existence. Eugenie was all in all to him; to secure her happiness was his only wish. How I thanked God from my inmost heart that he had granted my wish, and had bestowed upon the good man the happiness that he so much deserved.

Notwithstanding the great difference existing between Eugenie and the Baron, it seemed as if she were made for him, and he seemed to delight as much in her imperfections as in her good qualities. He spoiled her as much as he possibly could, and the more pert and wilful she became, the more brightly sparkled his eyes. He delighted in all her merry little pranks as if they were the most fabulous exploits; and was never angry or out of humor, even when he himself, as was too often the case, became the victim of her sportiveness.

He knew well that Eugenie, with all her roguery, possessed deep feeling, and loved him sincerely, and it was wonderful with what simplicity the shy, reserved man revealed to his beloved the deepest feelings of his heart. And Eugenie, who had heretofore declared war against all expressions of feeling, now listened with moist eyes to the most glowing expressions of love.

In her sweet ingenuousness she told us of all that the Baron confessed to her. She knew that auntie and I sympathized most deeply with her, and that

she might share with us what was to her dearest and holiest.

The happy bridegroom wished as early as the month of May to introduce Eugenie as his wife into the old castle of his ancestors, but Aunt Ulrike raised her voice against it. She could not allow her foster-child so soon to be taken from her; she wished first to give her some instruction in domestic concerns. The Baron considered that quite unnecessary, as his wife would have no care at all of the housekeeping; all would continue to go on as before. At that Eugenie made a doubtful face and said, "But honestly, I do not wish to appear to the housekeeper quite as stupid as a little goose. I should in the end disgrace myself like that backfisch (excuse me Daisy) who was told to boil some eggs soft, and after they had boiled for an hour complained to her mother that they would positively not become soft, let them boil as long as they might. No, no; Aunt Ulrike is right, as she always is; I must first understand housekeeping a little, and then the Baron may have his own way, if he can possibly wait no longer to take such a domestic affliction upon his shoulders."

So we abided by this decision; but I was curious to know how much Eugenie would learn of domestic affairs, for until now she had been unwilling to have anything to do with them. "Bah! don't trouble me with such things!" she always said when I wished her to go with me into the kitchen, where I often and willingly worked.

"But such things belong to women; will you never interest yourself in them?" asked I reproachfully. "'Come time, come means'; let me alone; don't be so insufferably wise, holy Margarethe," replied she lightly, running her

fingers over the piano keys, or throwing herself comfortably into an easy chair, and twisting her curls around her finger.

Now all this was changed. Eugenie became more ambitious, and exerted herself to the utmost to fill up this gap in her education.

But it was a difficult matter for Aunt Ulrike, who had undertaken to awake her talent for housekeeping. Eugenie set about the work with her usual amiability, still not very seriously. She was forever plotting mischief. She provided herself for her new undertaking with a dozen white kitchen aprons of the finest quality, and Baron Senft sent her a whole library of excellent cook-books. From these she learned daily three receipts by heart, and recited them like a little school-girl to her future lord and master, standing with modestly folded hands before him. It was laughable beyond expression, and the Baron was enchanted. But such of these as remained in her head were of little use to her, and only afforded opportunity for new follies. She secretly prepared the most marvelous dishes, always strictly following the directions of her cook-book. Whenever she gave her attention to her work she learned easily and quickly, showing great skill in all; but as soon as roguery crossed her thoughts, all care and attention were gone.

"Be so good, Eugenie, as to prepare this turnip," said Aunt Ulrike, and zealously Eugenie went to work. But she had soon finished, and in her hands the turnip had become a little doll. Under the green leaf tuft a face was cut, that the tuft surmounted like a cap, a cabbage leaf formed the little dress, and two potatoes were fastened on the sides for arms.

"What is that, Eugenie!" laughed Aunt Ulrike.

"Why I was to dress the turnip; there you have it. Is she not fine enough? I assure you it is her Sunday dress," said Eugenie earnestly.

Then again fruit was to be cooked.

"Wash it first, dear child," said auntie.

Eugenie ran quickly out and soon returned with soap and a woolen cloth.

"What are you going to do, Eugenie?" asked Aunt Ulrike, opening her eyes.

"Wash the berries, dear aunt," said she roguishly, laughing like a child.

At another time she stood thoughtfully by the fire watching the merry play of the flames under the kettle.

"Watch the water, and tell me when it boils, Eugenie," said Aunt Ulrike as she left the kitchen.

Immediately upon that our hopeful pupil came to me in an adjoining room where I was busy ironing, and holding a dipper-full of steaming water under my nose, said earnestly,

"You Daisy, tell me, does that water boil?"

So it was every day; one was never safe from her pranks. Sometimes she begged to be allowed to cook alone. At such times she gave her humor free reins, but always brought something good to the table.

"To-day we shall have only water soup; that must be sufficient for you," said she one day; and in the soup-tureen appeared only clear water, at which we looked in perplexity. Laughing, she ran out, and soon re-appeared with the good soup, for she had only wished to see our long faces.

A dish never came from her hands to the table that had not been made the subject of her sportiveness. Now the

roasted goose had a garland of flowers on its breast; now a wreath of parsley or paper ruffs adorned the cutlets or chicken; the fish had always something in its mouth, either a lament at its untimely death, or a piece of money or something of that kind that it was supposed to have swallowed in the water. One day a roasted goose, adorned with a wreath of red radishes, begged in tender verses to be allowed to accompany us to the next ball; she longed for company, and would meet many of her younger sisters there.

The Baron, too, to his greatest delight, often became the victim of her roguery. Of course he thought her charming in her neat kitchen aprons; and if her fingers, covered with meal, were roguishly passed through his black locks, he rejoiced as a child, and pressed the hand to his lips, let it be covered with meal or whatsoever else it might. He ate with delight whatever she prepared; no matter how it tasted, it was all the same to him, and nothing was equal to a potato or apple that she had pared for him. He would rather have kept it as a valuable relic, than put it into his month.

"To-day I have made for you a sponge cake, of which you are so fond," said Eugenie one day to him.

He was, of course, overjoyed, and overwhelmed her with thanks. She hastened out to get the wonderful cake, and soon returned with a large one finely sprinkled over with sugar, and surrounded by flowers.

"You must cut it yourself;—there and she placed a large knife beside her plate. He pushed the flowers a little aside, and cutting a large piece, laid it on his plate. It was a most marvellous production; the piece broke and crumbled singularly, and the color was

highly suspicious. But Eugenie had made it, so it must be good. In this conviction he raised a piece to his mouth, and Eugenie could only cry, "Wait! wait!" before the joke would have been carried too far, for he now saw that it was made of sand. The true one was now put in the place of the false, and the Baron was fuller of admiration than ever for his merry bride, who, though always roguish, was yet so affectionate and attentive toward him.

How much Eugenie learned of house-keeping I have never been able to discover; for at times the most simple things were new and strange to her—at least so she pretended—and at others she surprised us by showing a knowledge of all things that distinguish a practical housekeeper. Aunt Ulrike laughed as I expressed to her my astonishment at these things, and said, "Only let her alone, Gretchen; I am not anxious; Eugenie will surely do credit to her position. This has all been sport to her; she will not do differently with us. A girl who has so much good sense and judgment as Eugenie, becomes an efficient housewife as soon as she acts without control in her own house. She will buy her experience dearly, but that is nothing. She will certainly carry herself through, for she has the ability to do it. God grant that life, which she now regards far from seriously, may not change her happy disposition. She will not be free from little trials; but I now know our darling thoroughly, and know that a good kernel is concealed by the varying husks, and that it will assert itself by the side of her noble husband. God guides us mortals wisely and wonderfully; that Eugenie is constantly showing me. In her home relations the child's noble nature was

suppressed. God sent her to me, and gave her in you, Gretchen, a dear sister, and in our circle the good in her has been fully awakened. He conducted her to the man who was best suited to her, and she at once recognized his noble worth. I can now look forward quietly to her future, for all will be well."

The letter that she now received from her father expressed his sincere joy at the good fortune of his child. He promised to come to the wedding, although his business would make it necessary for him to return immediately to Bavaria. Eugenie would later go with her husband to that beautiful part of southern Germany. They formed many plans. I, too, had a glorious prospect before me, for Aunt Ulrike had promised her brother to accompany him when he returned to Bavaria, and I was to go with her.

"You are in my 'high school,' as Eugenie calls it," said Aunt Ulrike, "so it is necessary that you learn how to travel. That can be learned as well as everything else, and we will embrace the opportunity that now offers for it."

But we were not yet ready. It was the Baron's wish that the wedding should take place in July, and we had our hands full to arrange the house for the young pair. True, Eugenie had the best wish to assist us much in the arrangement of her affairs; but we well knew beforehand that we could not rely upon her assistance. Fortunately people can in a large city buy ready prepared all that they need, and we gladly took advantage of this. It was a pleasure to seek all the beautiful things for Eugenie's outfit; and when we had arranged our own affairs, the Baron came with an air of entreaty to ask our advice in his new arrangements,

for his old castle must be subjected to all kinds of renovations. He would leave nothing to be desired by his young wife, as he said.

"That would be just the work for mamma," said Eugenie laughing. "She revels in new arrangements, and has very good taste."

Aunt Ulrike looked inquiringly at Eugenie, and asked if it were really her purpose to ask her mother to visit us. Eugenie blushed, and said sadly, "No, auntie; it is better that she should not come. You certainly know that yourself; it is better for us all."

Aunt Ulrike sighed, and kissed Eugenie, in whose eyes the tears were standing. I felt very sorry for her, for I knew well that the letter she had received from her mother in reply to her announcement of her engagement was hardly motherly, and had cost her bitter tears. She had, it is true, expressed her joy at the engagement, but it was joy only for the "splendid match," as she called it; she had not a thought of her child's happiness, or the high moral

worth of her son-in-law. Her letter betrayed somewhat her envy of the high worldly position of the future baroness. It contained repinings at her own unhappy marriage, and complaints against her poor husband, so neglected by her, for whose unhappiness she alone must bear the blame, but as she thought unjustly.

"As your wedding is to be early in the summer, I regret that I cannot come," she wrote in conclusion. "You know I have been suffering for some time with my liver, and my physicians advise me to go to Carlsbad. But in the autumn, when it is so tedious here before the winter season begins, I hope to be able to visit you at your castle."

I understood only too well that this letter caused Eugenie much pain; but we could be only too glad not to be troubled by such a heartless, worldly woman. We were all sincerely glad that her father could come to the wedding, for she depended more and more upon it, and with the greatest impatience awaited his coming.



XVII.

MAN PROPOSES, GOD DISPOSES.

BUT things did not happen as we had all thought and expected.

The Baron was an excellent horseman, and it gave him pleasure to make especially unmanageable horses subject to his will. The spirited Eugenie also delighted in these conquests of her lover, who became excessively proud under her praises, which often excited the zeal of the proud rider almost to madness. My heart trembled and I could not understand Eugenie, whose eyes sparkled at the danger of her beloved.

One day came dreadful news. The Baron had been thrown from one of his wild horses, and was dragged a considerable distance. He had received a dangerous wound on the head, and a serious fracture of the leg.

The tears came to my eyes at this sad intelligence. Eugenie spoke no word, shed no tear; but the deathly paleness of her cheeks showed the deep anguish of her soul.

"Bring a carriage quickly," commanded Aunt Ulrike, and soon we were hastening to Senftenburg Castle. Eugenie was still dumb, white and tearless. Neither did we speak, but my tears flowed unceasingly, and tears stood also in Aunt Ulrike's eyes.

When we arrived at the castle the surgeon had just put on the bandages, and brought us consolatory news. The fracture of the limb was very bad and dangerous, the head wound was not alarming, and with careful nursing he

would soon recover from that. The application of the bandages had instantly deprived him of all strength, and he lay in an almost unconscious condition; but as soon as this changed to sleep there was nothing more to fear. No one must at present go to him, not even Eugenie, who listened with wide open eyes to his words. But although she could not see him she would remain at the castle, and as soon as he slept would go to him. So long she would wait, and we of course with her. At last, after long waiting, the physician came and conducted her to the bedside of the sufferer.

Till now that brave girl had maintained the greatest composure — had given not the slightest vent to her grief; but as the strong man lay so pale and helpless before her, as one dead, her slight form trembled, and supported by auntie she hastened from the room. Here she was quite overcome, and her deep grief found free vent in tears.

She wept long, and it was a great relief to her poor heart. When she at last became calm, she said earnestly and softly, "Auntie, now I realize what he is to me. I will not leave him. Who knows how long I may have him? He belongs to me; I have the holiest right and must take care of him."

Auntie nodded quietly. She had probably expected it, for her resolution was already taken.

"I will stay with you, my child; otherwise it will not do," said she softly. "Gretchen; take care of my house during my absence, and visit us occasionally; the remaining time you may devote to your Marie."

Then she instructed me in what I was to do, what arrangements to make, and what to send by Lisette. With heavy heart I went home alone, and faithfully did all that auntie had directed me to do. Then I hastened to my friend Marie, who had heard of the accident, and awaited me in the greatest anxiety. Marie's mother would not allow me to leave when I told her how matters stood, and during those days of sorrow I was the guest of my dearest friend. You may well suppose, my dear readers, that this was unspeakably pleasant for me; for to whom could I so freely open my anxious, overflowing heart, as to my dear Marie and her excellent mother? I slept with Marie in her room. That was very kind, and we often talked far into the night. Again and again we said "good night," and resolved to go to sleep; but again and again one thought of something important that the other must hear, and the question "Marie, are you asleep?" or "Gretchen, are you still awake?" was the signal for re-opening the conversation.

Almost daily I visited Senftenburg Castle, whither I went in the Baron's carriage, and Marie and her mother frequently accompanied me. At first the Baron's condition had been very alarming, for he had high fever, and appeared to be in great pain. Eugenie's presence had at first somewhat agitated him; but after a short conversation which he had with her, a wonderful quiet seemed to come over him, and the loved girl might stay with him as she wished. And what a true, faithful nurse was now the

splendid lady! Auntie was never weary of relating to me how Eugenie had changed. All of a thoughtless, superficial, foolish nature was changed to calm earnestness. During the first anxious days we could not induce her, except for a very short time, to leave the bedside of the sick man, that she might obtain a little rest. She watched over him quite jealously, and insisted that he should receive nothing except from her hands. She was most carefully punctual in giving him his medicine, and in following other directions of the physician.

The head wound healed quickly, and soon the sick man could better enjoy the company of his Eugenie, as the physician now allowed them to converse, which was at first strictly forbidden. Soon she could read to him, and also with music make the time pass more pleasantly; and auntie, who had undertaken the care of the household, often kept them company. I too came, and sometimes one or another of our friends, so that the dear sick one had a cheerful company gathered about him. His eyes wandered with quiet thankfulness from one to another, but always finally rested, with true veneration, upon his beautiful bride. Eugenie became occasionally the merry, jesting child with roguish eyes, but her usual quiet earnestness often brought the tears into my eyes. She never complained, even in her first days of anguish, but I often saw her eyes raised prayerfully toward heaven, from whence she received hope and strength. The fracture of the leg healed slowly, and appeared to give the surgeon great concern, it being a compound fracture which seldom entirely heals.

"Poor Eugenie, you can never marry a cripple," said the Baron one day with

tears in his eyes. Eugenie trembled slightly.

"Do you think your foot must be amputated?" she asked anxiously.

"I hardly fear that, as it has not yet been necessary," replied the Baron; "but the joint will certainly remain stiff; in that I cannot deceive myself."

"We will hope for the best, Arthur," replied she smiling. "You have so good a surgeon it will certainly heal."

The Baron was silent, but Aunt Ulrike noticed that after this conversation he was often disquieted, and that his eyes rested more anxiously and uneasily upon Eugenie. But he did not again mention his fears to her, and appeared himself to be more confident of his cure.

Week after week passed away; the bandage had been renewed; again a week passed, and now the principal bandage was to be removed. The Baron could scarcely conceal his agitation; he had a long conversation with Aunt Ulrike, who also appeared disturbed; only Eugenie quietly awaited the important hour, and was cheerful and unmoved. The day before it was to be removed she went to town with auntie, as she had latterly often done; but only a few hours had passed before auntie received a letter from the Baron, enclosing a note for Eugenie. The bandage had already been removed.

Eugenie quickly broke the seal. She became pale, and seating herself quietly at the window looked thoughtfully toward heaven. Aunt Ulrike wiped the tears from her eyes after reading her letter; then going quickly to Eugenie clasped her in her arms.

"God lays a heavy sorrow upon you, my child," she said softly. "When your happiness seemed so near, he tries

you severely. The Baron has told me, too, how it is."

"Auntie, I knew it would be so," replied Eugenie earnestly but softly. "I heard that the surgeon when he removed the first bandage, said to himself that the knee would always be stiff, so I have expected nothing else."

"You knew it child, and were so cheerful and calm during the whole time!" cried auntie amazed. "Do you also know that that betokens a stiff foot?"

"O yes, auntie, I know that much trouble, a slow pace, and a crutch follow," replied Eugenie with a trembling voice, the hot tears rolling down her cheeks. "But I also know that such a man doubly needs his wife."

"But he releases you from your promise, Eugenie," said auntie lightly. "You engaged yourself to a well, strong man; it would be always painful to him to see you the wife of a cripple. Consider it well, my child. You are young and fresh, and have many claims upon life; would not the lame husband soon be unspeakably troublesome to you? Will not the fetters in time become quite too oppressive? You undertake a double duty, which once undertaken must be fulfilled truly, kindly, and willingly."

"I thank you for your dear words, auntie," said Eugenie with unaccustomed gentleness. "It was your duty to say that to me, and my bridegroom's tenderness of feeling also bade him to release me from my promise in the present sad state of things. But now that you have done as your conscience directed, allow me to add a little word. Tell me honestly, Aunt Ulrike, do you really think me so—well, what word shall I use in order sufficiently to express what I should be guilty of, did I

now refuse to become the wife of that noble man, who without that will be unhappy enough through his accident? I have been a very superficial, thoughtless girl, to whom nothing appeared serious or sacred, who has been full of pretensions and infinitely unamiable. But my dear aunt, you have no longer the old Eugenie before you. I owe you and Gretchen more than I can in my whole life repay. You have both borne much from me, but if I can never show it to you, deep in my heart I have felt from the first moment into what true hands the dear God has sent me. And these last sorrowful days have entirely changed my foolish heart. By God's help, Arthur will have a brave wife in Eugenie. Do you believe that, auntie?"

I could not hear Aunt Ulrike's reply, for with my face pressed into my handkerchief I was sobbing bitterly. Soon I was clasped in Eugenie's arms, and in her old roguish way she took my handkerchief from my eyes.

"Now is my little governess content with her pupil, is she not, Daisy?" she asked, looking lovingly into my face. "I learned from my backfischchen to make such abominably long speeches. Did I do it well, little one?"

That instead of replying I clung to her neck and spoke dear, sweet words to her, which I now no longer remember, is understood without being told. It was a happy hour, which chained our hearts together for life.

A letter to Aunt Ulrike soon turned our thoughts to other things. Auntie and my papa had an only, quite elderly sister, who was now very sick, and wished to see her brother and sister once more. My papa wrote to auntie that he would soon visit her, and hoped it would be possible for her too to go to

F. to see their sick sister. It would be a deed of mercy if Aunt Ulrike could remain with her until her death, the near approach of which her increasing feebleness seemed to portend.

Auntie was greatly troubled; for although she had had little intercourse with this sister, she loved her sincerely, and earnestly wished to go to her. On the other hand her duties to her foster-children held her back; for even if I could remain still longer with Marie's parents, what would become of Eugenie, who could neither remain in Sentenbourg, nor go to her mother until the Baron had recovered.

Eugenie stood thoughtfully at the window, drumming upon the pane.

"Auntie," said she suddenly, "is not Pastor Sommer who is such a friend of yours, the minister of our parish?"

"Certainly, child; what do you want of him?"

"Do you know where he lives?"

"Not far from here; No. 12 Kronen Street."

"Thanks," and Eugenie immediately disappeared.

We gazed at each other in astonishment, and eagerly awaited her return. After a while she returned somewhat pale to the sitting room, laid aside her hat and shawl, and hastened to auntie's room, whither she had just gone. I heard them talking rapidly to each other without being able to understand anything correctly; but at last Eugenie came to me with glistening eyes, and asked, blushing, "Gretchen, will you be my bridesmaids to-morrow, you and Marie?"

I started up in astonishment. "To-morrow, Eugenie! What do you mean?"

"Why, that to-morrow is to be our wedding day," said she smiling. "I

tor Sommer is a good man. He will to-day provide all that is necessary. Fortunately I have my certificate of baptism here among my papers; that was the chief difficulty. To-morrow will be Sunday, and he will publish us once for all, and after church will marry us at Senftenburg Castle. I must remain with Arthur. It will not do for me to leave him; and I will at once become his wife that auntie may quickly go away; then no one can have aught against my remaining with him. Auntie has just given her consent. I lack only the bridesmaids, and Arthur the groomsmen. I think Eduard and Dr. Hausmann will willingly render us this service. I will write very lovely notes to them."

"But the Baron—does he agree to it?" interrupted I, full of surprise.

"He will not marry me at all. I must take him by storm, and take the business entirely out of his hands," laughed she roguishly, running away.

There it was again; just Eugenie's way. Good and brave—more than ever before—but fearless and resolute as she had been all her life. I shook my head thoughtfully, and hastened to

Aunt Ulrike, who honored me with all possible commissions, which I must quickly and promptly execute. She wrote a letter and then returned to Senftenburg Castle, there to make arrangements for the morrow's festivities, accompanied by Pastor Sommer, who would at once arrange all with the Senftenburg pastor, that the young pair might also be published in the church there. The Baron was positively to know nothing of it beforehand, lest, through tenderness for Eugenie, he should not give his consent.

"But will not Eugenie return with you to Senftenburg to-day? And what will the Baron think of it?"


"No; she will see him first in her bridal wreath. I shall tell him what I please," said auntie laughing. "Now make haste, or you will, after all, be a bridesmaid without a wreath for the bride."

I hastened away as quickly as possible; but before I provided for anything else I hastened to my Marie. She must first know all, notwithstanding the danger that I might be too late to obtain a fresh myrtle wreath for Eugenie.



XVIII.

A HAPPY DAY.

“ WILL Eugenie not come to Senftenburg to-day, Aunt Ulrike?” asked the Baron sadly, as the Sunday morning hours passed, and still no carriage appeared.

“O yes, dear Baron!” replied auntie. “She only wished to go first to church with Gretchen, and then she will come. But dear Baron, suppose you were to appear to-day in fuller toilet,” continued she cheerfully. “You dare not, of course, use your poor foot, but aside from that you can hardly be called a patient. Show that to your bride; surprise the dear child who has admired you long enough in this exquisite invalid costume. Yes? Shall I send Johann to you?”

The Baron cast an anxious glance, first at auntie, then at his still bandaged foot, and said, “If you think it would please Eugenie, I will do it at once. But dear auntie,” continued he slowly, “tell me again quite seriously if you really believe Eugenie will now marry me.”

Auntie’s face became serious. “Dear Baron,” said she very earnestly, “I again assure you that your doubts of Eugenie’s noble heart do her great injustice, therefore I earnestly beg you not to speak so again. Do you believe so little in her love for you? Do you really think her capable of changing her mind on any account whatever?”

“But best aunt, consider—the beautiful Eugenie the wife of a cripple!”

“What! cripple!” cried she earnestly. “What next! A somewhat stiff foot makes no cripple! Then again, you do not know whether it is really so stiff as you fear, and we will first await the result of your visit to Teplitz. Who knows whether it will not finally be quite well, and whether in a year’s time you will not ride with Eugenie on a wager? only rather less wild horses, if I may be allowed to advise.”

The Baron kissed Aunt Ulrike’s soft hand with childish tenderness. She nodded gaily to him, and begged him to make a very careful toilet, as he knew Eugenie was very observant of such things.

He was just ready; and as he glanced once again scrutinizingly in the mirror before him, a carriage drove up. A second and third followed, and surprised at the numerous company, the Baron sent his servant out to see who had come.

“Fraulein von Jagow and some friends from the town,” announced the servant. “They ask the honor to be allowed soon to pay their respects to the Baron; the ladies wish to arrange their toilets a little, they being very dust

It was a long time before the was removed, and the Baron was being impatient. At last the folding door opened, and holding Aunt Ulrike’s hand Eugenie entered the room in the lovely bridal dress. Marie and the Baron followed, also in bridal attire, then

parents, and lastly Eduard and Dr. Hausmann, with fresh flowers in their button holes.

Aunt Ulrike led the blushing bride to her lover, and said, "Eugenie herself brings the answer to your question, and asks that her bridegroom will to-day make her his wife, in case he has no serious objection."

The Baron believed himself to be dreaming. He forgot his lame foot and was about to spring from his easy-chair, but Aunt Ulrike gently pushed him back.

"Eugenie, are you in earnest?" he stammered, stretching his arm toward his beloved. She hid her face in her hands, and kneeling by his side leaned her head on his shoulder. He put both arms around her and held her quietly and blissfully in his embrace. A solemn stillness fell upon us all. Marie and I pressed each others hands and wept lightly, and Aunt Ulrike held her handkerchief before her eyes.

Then the folding doors of the next room were opened, in which, between high plants and flowers, a little altar had been arranged, where Pastor Sommer awaited the bridal pair. The servants rolled the Baron's easy-chair forward, Eugenie knelt again at his side, and the ceremony began. At the back of the room, hidden behind flowers, were singers from our circle of acquaintances. They had been joined by some from the village, whose school teacher well instructed them in singing. They greeted the bridal pair with soft es, then the minister spoke a few earnest and tender words, and the ceremony was at an end. Aunt Ulrike perted many of the villagers, who early begged to be allowed to congratulate the Baron, to enter the room; and the joys of mirth and revelry reached us

from the court-yard, for the whole village, old and young, had poured forth at the joyful news.

A splendid banquet which Aunt Ulrike had yesterday hastily prepared, followed. The whole village participated in it, for on the turf in the courtyard long tables were spread at which the man and maid-servants, as well as all the village, were feasted. It was a never-to-be-forgotten, happy wedding, and the Baron was now so tender and filled with quiet happiness, now so merry and bubbling over with humor, that one no longer recognized him. In the evening we young people mingled with the village dancers, and the peasants held their heads twice as high as usual when their beautiful young mistress danced with them. The Baron of course could not make the young peasant women equally proud as he moved about among them, but he never danced as every one knew. "Now," said he, laughing, to his beautiful wife, "I have a good excuse, for in my stiffness I should knock over all the tables and chairs. Now it is 'The poor man has a stiff foot, and can do nothing on account of his awkwardness.'"

It was late before it was quiet at Senftenburg Castle; for as night approached and the carriages of the guests were brought to the castle door, a fine torchlight procession came up the village street. The peasants came to take joyous leave of their dear master and mistress, and amid rejoicings and torchlight we drove gaily through the village.

This happy festival was followed by a quiet season, for Aunt Ulrike went the next day to her sick sister. She soon wrote that she found her in a very sad condition, and would not leave the sufferer again, as her end appeared to be very near. My papa had proposed to

GRETCHEN'S JOYS AND SORROWS.

auntie to take me home at once when she went to her sister, as I had already been away longer than my appointed time. But auntie wished me to accompany her on her proposed journey, and as my parents gladly granted her request I remained in Berlin, or rather with Eugenie, who rejoiced as a child to be able to have her Daisy a guest in her home.

It was a pleasant season, rich in happy and joyous hours, which I spent in dear Senftenburg. Eugenie overwhelmed me with love and kindness, and although the rogue sometimes appeared in a thousand pranks, yet she seemed to me to have become quite another person, and I loved her more than ever.

My stay at Senftenburg Castle was doubly pleasant to me after I found how necessary I was to Eugenie. She left her husband very unwillingly to attend to other duties, so I undertook the management of the household affairs at the old castle with great zeal and quite self-confidently. It was a real pleasure to arrange the beautiful articles of Eugenie's fine dowry, and happy as a child the young wife skipped and danced about among the things as I arranged them; and that the Baron might be able to see something of all the splendor, she rolled his easy-chair from one room to another, and from one closet to another. Now he must admire the flowers on the damask table linen, now the nice white bed cover, bound with beautiful red silk. Then again she let the sun shine through the white, red and green glasses of her glass closet, or piled up plates and dishes of her costly table service before him; the soft cushions of her elegant sofa and easy-chair he must try for himself; admire the embroidered curtains and table cover; yes, even her clothes closet was stripped

of its rich contents, which were carried before the admiring eyes of the fond husband. I no longer knew Eugenie. How indifferent had she been to such things until now! "They now belong to a young housewife, and have therefore acquired worth in her eyes," said Aunt Ulrike, and she was right, as she always was.

The Baron still dared not use his foot, but he now waited willingly and patiently for better times, since Eugenie was his own and needed not to leave him again. We were not without visitors at the castle; the former hermitage had become quite changed in that respect; and what an amiable hostess was the young wife! One could see nothing prettier than Eugenie in her new dignity. With an assurance as if she had never in her life been anything but the Baroness von Senft, she did the honors of her house; and though on account of her husband's illness all duties toward their guests devolved upon her, she discharged them well in every respect.

At first she allowed the domestic affairs to remain as they were, for the care of the Baron was her only concern; but she asserted that in the autumn when they returned from their journey, she would become a housekeeper second to none under the sun. Who would not believe it need not, if only the Baron did, and the rogue knew well enough that he believed no one ever did, or ever could, surpass her in anything.

A few days after the wedding, Eugenie's father arrived at Senftenburg, to the joy of his daughter. He was a fine looking, slender man, with a very intelligent face and of noble carriage, pleasant and amiable—the fine diplomatist and a man from head to foot. Different as and his son-in-law were, they soon understood each other. In the richly endo-

mind of the Baron was much that accorded with that of his father-in-law; and their mutual love for Eugenie united their hearts by an indissoluble tie. His daughter's happiness which shone in her eyes, was like sunlight to the serious, often depressed father, and gladdened his heart more and more, so that he felt very happy in the society of his loved ones. He would here await Aunt Ulrike's return, and then go with her to southern Germany. Eugenie would go with her husband to the baths at Teplitz, and on our way back auntie and I were to visit them there and return home with them.

After some weeks Aunt Ulrike returned to us. Her sister had by a quiet death been freed from all earthly sorrows, and grieved as auntie was at her loss, she thanked God that he had not prolonged the sufferings of the poor woman.

In the circle of her loved ones auntie soon became more like herself, and the

presence of her brother-in-law contributed much toward making her more cheerful. They must have had much of importance to say to each other, for I saw them sitting together for hours in the acacia arbor in the park, or walking up and down on the smooth gravelled walk; and auntie's dear face, whose varying expressions I had learned accurately to read, showed that most serious thoughts occupied her mind. Eugenie told me that her father considered it better to remain separated from his wife. Auntie tried to advise him for the best, and only too gladly would have withheld him from taking such an extreme step, always hoping that the gay, thoughtless wife would change. How sincerely I pitied this noble man, who had so much to endure through the caprices of his wife! His experience showed me what an important thing a proper education is, which nips in the bud all wrong and pernicious influences.

XIX.

THE JOURNEY

DURING this time the summer had considerably advanced. The surgeon urged the journey to Teplitz, hoping that the still very stiff foot of the Baron might from the use of the bath become movable, so we all prepared ourselves for our departure. I readily helped Eugenie, who understood quite too little of packing, and wished to learn how to do it; but when I saw Aunt Ulrike pack, and that I understood nothing of it, I must be instructed in it myself.

As we were mourning we needed little baggage, which auntie gladly avoided.

She said large traveling trunks and countless satchels and boxes gave her an unfavorable opinion of those travelers to whom they belonged; for they showed that their owners were either very frivolous or very unpractical. Afterward I saw myself how agreeable it was to take little with me, and was quite proud of the small dimensions of our trunks as compared with those of other travelers. Auntie avoided if possible such things as satchels, boxes, packages, and other things that one carries in the hand. With shame I

thought of the numberless little boxes and packages that I piled up about me on my journey from home. I would even have brought my canary bird in its cage, if auntie had not laughingly prevented it.

Now we had nothing with us in the carriage but a package of umbrellas well bound together, a bundle of shawls in a leather strap, and each of us a leather hand-bag containing useful articles for our journey, as cologne water, a little chocolate, a small work-box, a guide book with maps, a note book, brushes, handkerchiefs, and such desirable articles. All useless things must be left behind, much as I begged and lamented, and could not understand that on a journey one must spare many things, else had he better remain at home with his comforts and trifles. Auntie had formerly traveled much with her husband, and had then gained her experience. She was simple and practical, and I could not have found a better teacher for this part of my education. How well she understood how to pack a trunk! I had tried to pack mine, but it was soon full, and a whole mountain of things remained outside looking sadly into it, for there was no more room for them. Then came auntie. Quietly she took everything out again, and then set herself at work to pack. At the bottom she placed the heavy articles, as linen, books, &c., then carefully folded dresses and skirts, and above in a particular place, collars, handkerchiefs, and similar light articles. Ribbons, gloves, and other loose trifles were placed by themselves in a little box that was put in a little corner. The gaps were now filled with shoes and such things. It was a pleasure to see how everything found a place. It seemed as if the little trunk was made of rubber, it held so much.

Eugenie left some days earlier than we, and Herr von Jagow accompanied his children to relieve Eugenie of all care of the journey. Later he was to join us, in case he could leave them, and we were all to meet again at a little watering-place in the Bavarian Alps.

Our journey was not very pleasant in the beginning, for it carried us through tiresome tracts of country. So I had more leisure to notice our companions who were with us in the coupe. There were some ladies, old and young, two of whom sat silently in their corners; but the third very soon began to talk with auntie and me, and seemed interested in all that was told her. But auntie had evidently no great desire to converse with her, for she took a book from her pocket and began to read. The talkative lady now devoted herself entirely to me; and although I was not greatly pleased with her appearance, yet I considered it my duty to talk politely with her of all that she asked about. So she very soon knew all my circumstances, auntie's name and position, as well as the object and extent of our journey. She was much pleased to hear that we were to visit the Bavarian mountains, for she was also going there and wanted company, which she believed she had found in us. She promised to arrange her plans to suit ours, as good company was the chief consideration with her; for a lady to travel alone was quite too unpleasant. I did not venture to object, but as she appeared to be a kind, sensible woman, I agreed fully to all her propositions. Now began to question auntie as to whether she was going, that she might arrange her plans in accordance with hers, but auntie appeared to be out of humor and gave her evasive answers.

To my astonishment, at the next stopping-place auntie changed carriages.

"Did you not like the other coupe, auntie?" asked I. "We had such good company."

"No, child; the obtrusiveness of that woman was unbearable," said she; "she is certainly not a woman of good standing. Her appearance displeased me from the first."

"But she appeared so kind and was so alone," replied I sympathetically. "I can well imagine how pleasant it would be to find company."

"You do not understand, child," laughed auntie. "She will not be alone long; give yourself no concern about that. But she must give up our company, we are not suited to her. Moreover, be more cautious, my little daughter, and not at once tell every one who we are and what we do. In traveling one too frequently meets with people against whom it is necessary to be on one's guard. It is better to be too silent toward traveling company than too communicative. A young girl cannot be too careful in this respect."

I pondered her advice, and now noticed how non-communicative our traveling companions were, especially the ladies. That was certainly not pleasant, but there was soon so much to see that I gladly dispensed with the conversation.

That auntie was right in recommending me to be cautious, I found soon after our meeting with that talkative lady, of whom I will here relate something. In beautiful Parthenkirch, where we remained for some time, we went one day to walk in the company of a pleasant family from Berlin, whom we had met there. After a time we heard laughter and the loud voices of a company approaching us, and I now recognized in one of the ladies our talkative traveling

companion. She was very elegantly dressed, and appeared no longer able to complain of loneliness, for she was surrounded by several elegant young men, and the conversation was very lively. Suddenly she saw us and hastened toward us.

"Ah, Frau von Jagow, how glad I am to see you again! And you, Fraulein Gretchen, how do you do? What a fortunate meeting!"

Auntie replied to the greeting with striking coldness, and I was not greatly pleased to see the lady again, who pleased me much less to-day; still I replied politely to her questions, for I could not do otherwise. She appeared at first to have a great desire to stay with us, but she soon thought better of it and followed the call of her companions, with whom she appeared to be on the most friendly terms.

"How in the world did you make her acquaintance?" asked Herr von Barnheim, laughing, as soon as she had left us.

"She traveled with us, but I know nothing more of her," replied my aunt. "Do you know anything of her?"

"As much as all the guests at Parthenkirch, but no more," laughed he. "But I think that is quite enough. I advise you to keep the good woman at a distance, for she does not appear to be the most suitable company for you, Fraulein Gretchen. As I hear, she has been a member of different troops of strolling players, and has had a most varied experience."

I blushed, and rejoiced that our walk was soon ended, and that we were in no danger of again meeting her. The next day we heard that she had left, and my heart was lightened considerably, for it was to be hoped that we were free from her company.

After this digression I will turn again to the early part of our journey. I now traveled for the first time through a strange land. I had never crossed the borders of Prussia until now, and we flew through Saxony, and then another country, beautiful Bavaria, lay before us.

In Saxony the country first began to have some charm for me; the beautiful Elster valley, especially, pleased me exceedingly, and I beheld with surprise the strong railroad bridges that spanned it. We spent the first night at Hof, in Bavaria, and the next day we passed Kulmbach, whose highly picturesque castle looked down upon us from a high rock, and while other travelers enjoyed the fine, genuine Bavarian beer, auntie ordered coffee for our refreshment. She drank little, and walked to and fro in the open air; but I seated myself comfortably in the neat dining room of the station, took off my hat and gloves, and arranged my hair, from time to time blowing my hot coffee to cool it. I was just about to sip it when the bell rang for us to take our places; auntie called, and sadly I left my nice coffee behind. But that was a good lesson for me, for from that time forth I made more haste. The beautiful scenery soon made me forget my little vexation, for we were approaching Bamberg, passed the fine cloister of Banz, and saw in the distance the green mountains of Franconia.

We remained several days in Bamberg. What a beautiful town it is! How beautifully situated, surrounded by sloping mountains, and adorned by the stately Cathedral and by the ruins of the Castle of Altenburg. When the weather was fine we ascended to this old castle. How delighted I was with the beautiful scenery! I now saw

mountains for the first time. I wished for wings that I might soar far above them. How much might one see up there!

Historical memories were awakened in the old castle; for in the year 1208 the Emperor Philip of Swabia is said to have been murdered by Otto von Wittelsbach in the tower room in which we rested. I shuddered, although I could not discover the never-extinct blood-stain. But those stains belong to such terrible stories.

In Hof, where we spent the first night, I was able only with great difficulty to dress in season for our departure. At first I carelessly allowed the time to pass, and finally was obliged to put on my hat with my hair only half braided, as the omnibus stood at the door to take us away.

Remembering this haste and anxiety, I arose very early on the morning of our departure from Bamberg, and was so soon ready with my packing and breakfasting, that I asked permission of auntie to go out for a little walk on the street. "Do not forget the time," warned auntie, willingly granting the desired permission. So I walked joyfully up and down the street, and the time passed very pleasantly, for it was market day, and the country people came in at every gate with their loads of goods, and all was bustle and confusion.

I went once more to take leave of the beautiful Cathedral, looked at the old pictures and grave stones, especially the celebrated monument of the Emperor Heinrich II, and his consort Kunigunde, and did not notice that it was growing late until the clock tower above me struck the hour. Frightened, I hurried away, for near the time for our departure, I still had to return to the hotel.

rapidly through the streets thinking I knew the way, but how startled I was suddenly to find myself in the square before the Cathedral, which I had shortly before left. I now inquired my way from street to street, but one directed me this way and another that. In great haste and perspiration I went on and on. I would gladly have taken a carriage, but no where saw one empty. Almost crying, I at last asked a boy to accompany me, and breathless reached our hotel.

Auntie was very anxious about me. We had lost the early train, and must now wait till afternoon. I was quite cast down, but auntie comforted me; to-day it mattered little, but let it be a lesson for me that it might not occur again.

But my wandering in the morning was only the first of the misfortunes that befel me during the day. One has such unlucky days. That day I must have put my left foot out of bed first.

In the afternoon we had arrived happily at the station and had taken our places, when auntie, noticing an old acquaintance whom she wished to see and who had taken another coupe, left me to go to her. She gave me the tickets as she hastened away. At the same moment some delicate fruits were brought along, and I, as well as others who were with me, bought some. They pressed to the open door at which I sat, and I obligingly passed the fruit on all sides, receiving the money in return for it, and then done busily arranged our things that were lying about.

When auntie re-appeared, and with her came the conductor, who called for the tickets. I looked for ours—they were gone! Frightened, I looked on the floor, on the cushions, turned all my pockets out, shook dress and shawl, all

the others helping, but in vain. I found only the white baggage checks; the tickets must have dropped from my hand in passing the fruit. I could not remember having seen them after auntie laid them on my lap.

The conductor shrugged his shoulders, and regretted the mishap, but could not, if he would, allow us to go without them. It was the last moment; the train was just ready to start. In haste I jumped from the coupe when something dropped to the ground; it was one of the tickets. Thank God! at least there was one, but the other did not appear. Who knew where that had gone? I hastened to the ticket office, and was glad to be able to get it in season.

Weeping bitterly, I drew back into the corner of the coupe. My good aunt uttered no word of reproach, but shame and anger at my carelessness embittered almost my whole journey. "In future you must put the tickets immediately into your purse, that is the best place," said she later. "What has happened to you to-day has happened to many others. It will hardly happen to you again." "Yes, after you were obliged to pay money for my carelessness," sighed I kissing her hand. "Calm yourself child," said she kindly. "If one could so easily rectify all mistakes it would be well. Now enjoy the fine scenery and forget this trifle and your vexation. I freely forgive you all."

And truly there was so much that was beautiful and interesting to see, and that one must have a free, happy heart to enjoy, that I was really thankful to Aunt Ulrike for her kindness and forbearance. How I was charmed with lovely, antiquated Nuremburg, where we next came! I could not see enough of this wonderful town, full of wonders

of the middle ages. Every house there had a look peculiar to itself, every little tower, every gable, every gutter its own peculiar ornamentation; one saw paintings and carved work wherever the eye turned, and it all gave the street a most cheerful, and withal very unique appearance. Of course we saw to the best advantage all in the town that was worth seeing. But as all these things are much better described in Badeker's guide book, I will spare you and myself a description of them here.

I was pleased above all with St. Sebaldus Church, in which is the splendid Sebaldus monument. What a man must that Peter Vischer have been! The beautiful St. Lorenzer church turned my thoughts to Him for whose service it was built, and the very fine roses over the entrance excited in me the most highly poetic feelings.

But one place I cannot omit to mention—the church-yard of St. Johann, in Nuremberg, the most peculiar burial place that one can see. Noble men—Hans Sachs, Albrecht Durer, Peter Vischer, and other eminent citizens of Nuremberg were laid here to rest. Here, placed side by side, large flat sand stones cover more than three thousand graves, being the whole length and breadth of them. They are decorated with the iron coats of arms and names of the old patricians who have slept for centuries under them. In the walled vaults beneath, coffin is placed above coffin, all the members of a family being buried together, and all covered by the same stone that centuries ago covered their fathers. Truly, a table of ancestors engraven upon the stone by the hand of death itself.

I left beautiful Nuremberg very unwillingly; but something still more beautiful was before us—fashioned by

no human hand—the glorious Alpine world. The visit to Munich, which lay on our way, we deferred until our return, for Herr von Jagow, who was now away, would then be our guide.

Now we approached nearer and nearer to the distant Alpine chain, and our entrance into this lovely world could not have been more pleasant. The sun was near his setting, bathing the mountains in a dark red glow, and they seemed to stand there like pictures of fairy land. It was so grand and sublime beyond all comparison, that I quietly folded my hands, and tear after tear rolled down my cheeks. O God, how great, how glorious is thy world, and how unspeakably happy he who can become acquainted with so beautiful a part of it! What are all the works of man in comparison with thy creations!

Should I tell you minutely of all the places we visited during the next few weeks, I could fill a whole book with my descriptions, and yet come to no end. I should be able to give you no idea of it all—how beautiful it was everywhere, how never-to-be-forgotten those glorious, blissful days were.

We made a short trip to Algau, the land of luxuriant green meadows and fine cattle, and whose wonderfully beautiful Alpine chain was dearer to me than all else. Immenstadt, Sonthofen, and Oberstdorf were the most considerable places from which we made excursions to the mountains. From Immenstadt one can go by rail to Lindau and Constance, but auntie promised Swiss journey for another time. we went to the Bavarian Alps and first station, Fussen. With especial pleasure I look back to this little of God's world; for near there lies the pearl of the whole surrounding

the charming Hohenschwangau, where we at the little inn, "Rose of the Alps," were only too well served by the landlady, a vivacious Tyrolese, in her picturesque national costume—the red rose on her pointed hat, and silver chain on her bodice. It was a most attractive little place, shaded by the most beautiful lindens growing near the door. Before us sparkled the quiet Alp Lake, on which white swans moved lightly, surrounded by green slopes and picturesque precipices, above which the high peaks of the Alps could be seen in the distance. One really could not blame the young King of Bavaria for building

here a costly little castle for his beautiful Queen Marie, a most expert mountain climber. From this castle one can look far out over mountain, sea and plain.

Garmisch and Parthenkirch, lying at the foot of the beautiful Zugspitz, were places where we tarried longer; and although we made wider tours, for instance to the beautiful Kochel and Walchen Lakes, yet we stayed in those picturesque spots only for a short time. Near here something happened to me that I shall never forget as long as I live.

XX.

AN ADVENTURE.

ENCLOSED by the mighty precipices of the Zugspitz, lies the peaceful Eibsee, glistening between green

slopes and high rocky walls. Its waters abound in fish, but the number of persons who derive any advantage from it is small, for it has for centuries belonged to the proprietors of those little huts, scattered along on the banks. They are a gipsy-like looking class of men, the fishers of the Eibsee. Dark eyes upon one from their swarthy, dirty skin, and he who trades with them must be careful lest he be cheated and outwitted only by so little as a few farthings. Still, the peculiar beauty of the sea attracts strangers there from every direc-

tion. We too, visited this charming nook, and were delighted with the grand solitude and the beauty of its position. A large black-eyed woman, with a sad face, rowed us about on the water, and only the large sum with which auntie rewarded her could win a smile from her. It was still early when we turned again toward the village of Greinan, where our carriage was. The way thither lay through green meadows and slopes, and made countless picturesque turns, furnishing rich material for my sketch book; therefore I asked auntie to go on with the other two ladies of our company, while I stayed behind to make some sketches of the place.

She hesitated to leave me behind alone, but the sun was quite high, the way was much traveled, and she at last consented, bidding the little boy who showed me the way to stay with me. I was soon deeply absorbed in my work;—the trees hung so picturesquely over little rocky projections, and between them appeared in the distance a church spire or the roof of a peasant's hut. I knew not where to stop; each spot seemed more beautiful than any other.

At last I noticed that the heavens reddened; the sides of the Zugspitz shone as if they were of molten gold, the sun sank, and it was high time for me to return. Auntie was certainly impatiently awaiting me. I gathered my things together, and now first noticed two brown men approaching me from the Eibsee. They carried large sticks in their hands, their clothing was ragged and gipsy-like, and against the bright evening sky their giant forms stood out quite threateningly. I looked anxiously at them, and with beating heart thought of all sorts of dreadful things—robbery, cruelty, and who knows what not, of which these dwellers by the Eibsee were said to be capable. Evening was near, it became dark every moment, and these men came directly toward me.

Full of dread I called to the boy who shortly before was playing near me, but he had disappeared; who knew if he were not in league with the men! A nameless fear seized me, I ran along the road that led to Greinan, but the village was still far away, and the men came nearer and nearer. Already I heard their voices; they appeared to call to me and laugh at me. Again I tried to look at them, and O terror! I saw clearly that one raised his stick threateningly at me. There was no

longer any doubt—my fear was only too well founded—they were pursuing me. Screaming loudly I plunged forward, up and down hills, thinking only of escape by flight. I fell over stones and stumps of trees, and lost my parasol and sketch book; it was all the same to me—only forward, forward, before the terrible ones, who I knew were still behind, could reach me. Now I heard their voices so near me that I was almost beside myself with fear. I would throw myself at their feet entreating their mercy, and give them everything I had with me. But how little that was! they would certainly plunder and abuse me. At the last moment a form appeared through the trees. Was it one of their comrades? I cried loudly for help, and rushed forward. Thank God! it was a well dressed man, and I was saved! In mortal terror I flew toward the stranger to implore his protection, let him be who he might; but who can conceive my joy at seeing before me my friend Dr. Hausmann? With outstretched arms I flew toward him, and without realizing what I did, sank on his breast.

"Save me, for God's sake!" cried I, beside myself, and became unconscious. When I recovered, I lay on the turf. Dr. Hausmann kneeling near me. I felt very faint, and for some time could not remember what had happened. At last I suddenly remembered all, and looked anxiously about me.

"Do not be anxious, Fraulein Gretchen, there is nothing more to be said. Dr. Hausmann reassuringly. "The men were only playing with you; they pretended to follow you because they saw your terror. Now you are secure, for I will remain with you."

It now occurred to me how I had, in my fright, sought the protection of

friend. Deep red covered my face, and I did not venture to look up. Dr. Hausmann, noticing my confusion, sought to free me from it.

"Are you not at all surprised to see me here?" he asked earnestly, seating himself near me on the grass. "Did you know that I sought you?"

"I? No; how should I know that?" replied I, striving to compose myself. "Are you alone, and how did you discover our retreat? I did not know that you had this journey in view."

"It was quite a sudden resolution, but one that I now doubly bless, since I can be useful to you, Franlein Gretchen," said he, looking so kindly in my eyes that I again blushed deeply.

"Please, I must go to auntie, she will be anxious about me," whispered I timidly, trying to rise. My knees trembled violently, so that I was obliged to lean upon the arm of my friend, unpleasant as it was to me. But he talked gaily on; told me that Eduard accompanied him, and that I should find him with auntie at Greinau, whither we hastened. They had learned on their arrival in Parthenkirch where we were.

The walk did me good; I soon needed my support no longer, for my strength came again quickly. I now told him the particulars of my adventure, and sought to excuse my fear. He kindly explained to me how natural it was. From auntie and Eduard, who greatly exaggerated my anxiety, and derided me as a coward, he defended me so fully that I thanked him sincerely, especially as he passed very lightly over our meeting. Singularly, I related all else to my good Aunt Ulrike, but it was impossible for me to describe to her my meeting with Dr. Hausmann; those words would positively not pass my lips. But why? He appeared to think

no more of it, and conducted himself so politely and reservedly toward me that it afterward appeared to me like a wonderful dream.

In the company of our new traveling companions, we passed a very pleasant week, and wandered over the mountains in all directions. Eugenie's father soon joined us as he had promised, and with him we afterward visited Bavaria's beautiful capital, Munich. How astonished I was at the countless collections of works of art which had for the most part been procured and collected by the talented, art-loving King Ludwig. We remained two weeks in Munich, and had good opportunity to see all thoroughly—the two picture galleries, the sculpture gallery, palaces, churches, and all else that was worth seeing—but what interested me most was the huge statue of Bavaria, in whose head we could move about as comfortably as in a little room, and whose eyes formed the nicest little windows through which we could see Munich and the wide plain beyond, and further on the blue Alps, which cast friendly farewell glances toward us.

On our return we passed through Bohemia in order to visit Eugenie and the Baron at Teplitz, of whom Herr von Jagow had brought us most cheering news. At first the bath had not much benefited the Baron, and Eugenie had been obliged to exert herself to the utmost to divert the mind of the sufferer, and her thankful husband could not tell us enough of her love and kindness. Now the Baron was much better, and we entertained with them the most lively hope of his ultimate cure. The autumn found us all again assembled in Aunt Ulrike's sitting-room. How delightful had the journey been! and how many beautiful things I had seen! But

my second home, here with my best aunt, was to me most beautiful of all. I felt that with sincere pleasure, as we again found ourselves in the dear rooms.

But with powerful strides the time now drew near when I must bid these rooms farewell. "For a year I will take your Gretchen with me," said Aunt Ulrike to papa, one well-remembered day when I left Schreibersdorf with her. Oh! then I believed I could never wait so long—never bear so long a separation. A year! What an eternity for me, who had until now never for a day been separated from my parents, brothers and sisters! Twelve long, long months! And now more than a year had passed. Not only twelve months, but even five more, and I still lived; the separation had not made me sick, and I had not pined away as I thought. No; on the contrary, I bloomed in all the freshness and vigor of youth—had become stronger, and if my mirror told me the truth, much improved in appearance. I felt myself bound by a thousand threads to the large city, the new circle into which Aunt Ulrike had introduced me, and from which my timid heart had shrunk. Much as I loved my dear home, my parents, brothers and

sisters, a great sadness came over me when I thought of my separation from all my loved friends in Berlin. Auntie, with her unspeakable kindness, her fine culture, and her deep affection for me, for which I was so unutterably thankful—Eugenie, for whom I bore the most sincere, sisterly love—Marie, the truest friend of my life—the Baron, Dr. Hausmann, Eduard, and so many, many who had become dear to me—I must leave them all behind. I could scarcely endure the thought, and yet it must be! The day of my departure was at hand, and overwhelmed by a thousand proofs of love and attachment I took leave of all my dear ones. Eugenie and the Baron promised to visit me soon at my parents' home, and auntie comforted me with that promise. I was especially happy at the assurance that my dearest Marie would, as I had earnestly begged, soon after my return home spend a long time with me there.

So with lighter heart I tore myself from the places where I had received so much good. A richly written, beautiful leaf had the good God added to the book of my life, and I could never sufficiently thank Him for it.



XXI.

HOME AGAIN.



WITH what joy I flew to my dear father's arms after our long separation, when he came to take me away from Berlin! And with what feelings I now turned toward home after taking leave of my greatly honored aunt!

My heart rejoiced as we approached that part of the country where my parents' home was, and which appeared so familiar to me. Oh! that was after all the most beautiful place in the world, more beautiful than all I had seen and admired on my journey.

Soon the well-known region in which our village lay was before me. Now we left the wood that on my departure had concealed my home from me. There appeared the church tower still reaching proudly toward heaven, its green copper roof glistening in the sun, and on the gilded ball above revolved now as ever the bright weather vane.

Now we came to the narrow, sandy road that brought us to the village, and in which the carriage wheels were so deeply buried that we went forward but slowly. On both sides of the slope grew, as formerly, yellow immortelles and rich cy-
sponge; the bees and butterflies
ered above the flowers, and over us
he blue sky flew a flock of daz-
gly white pigeons. You dear birds,
ou come to meet me as friendly
ngers from home?

When we left the narrow, sandy road,
of peasant children waited, as
, for the approaching carriage.

The boys cracked their long whips, the girls looked timidly at us with their clear blue eyes, then, tittering, stuck the corners of their aprons in their mouths, while the little children hid their flaxen heads shyly in the dresses of the larger girls. In the pasture, the old shepherd tended his flock, his brown cloak hanging in spite of the warm weather from his shoulders, and the blue stocking at which he was knitting, dangled as ever to and fro before him. His dog pricked up his ears and sprang forward to bark at the horses, as all dogs consider it their duty to do, till Friedrich, our old coachman, drove him away with the whip, and the shepherd in greeting pulled at his broad-brimmed hat.

At last we reached the first house of the village. It was the peasant Fächner's. I knew it well—knew also the white cotton tassels that bobbed from the window. They were on just such a cap, and the good old face in it beamed with pleasure as I greeted it pleasantly.

We passed house after house. I was known everywhere, everywhere good friends were looking from the windows, and old acquaintances sat on the benches before the house doors. Here was the old Armgard who had so often given us honey—there the peasant Nicklas who helped gather our fruit; here the kind-hearted little shoemaker who made the children's shoes—there the young girls with whom I had been confirmed, and

the children who played with my brothers and sisters; there was no cessation of greetings, salutations and hand-shakings. I wished to leave the carriage, but papa would not allow it. Now we reached our home—our dear, beautiful house with the green window shutters and the high gables, where was the stork's nest in which there were again young ones, exactly as when I was at home. The old linden still shaded the spot before the house, and there, just there, came my little brothers in their donkey cart, little Lieschen sitting like a lady between them.

"Stop, coachman; I must get out; I cannot stay in the carriage any longer."

The children nearly stifled me when they found it was I who had come to meet them, and then they ran with loud rejoicings into the house. My mamma could hardly free herself from my embrace. I laughed and cried in turn, and then embraced all again. Then the servants, their eyes glancing with their old attachment, came into the house. Now I must go from one room to another, from one corner to another; I must see everything, must show all that I still lived and was again at home. In yard and garden, in stall and coach-house, everywhere the boys dragged me. I must see all; everywhere they had something new to show me; here young pigeons and chickens, there the little calf of our black Bless, or the new swing in the shed, and the pretty pigeon house in the poultry yard. And how the children had all grown! Little Hannchen was three years younger than I, and was almost above the head of little mamma! Eduard, who was a year younger than I, was just spending his vacation at home. He looked rather pale, the good boy, perhaps on account

of growing so fast; for he was considerably taller than I, and I was no liliputian. And Anton, the great boy, and the little ones, Max, and Ulrich, and Lieschen, how fresh and pretty they all looked! I had to kiss them again and again in spite of their not very clean faces, which were covered with dirt from the street.

"What a stately young lady you have become," said my mother. "The city air seems to have agreed with you."

"She looks like a lady, terrifically fine," remarked the young gymnast, pulling at a very uncertain moustache on his upper lip.

"Did you bring me something, Gretchen?" asked Lieschen pulling at the handle of my traveling bag.

"Yes, unpack Gretchen, unpack!" cried all the other children, and now began a rummaging and stirring of my things. I could not possibly keep the little torments off. It went better when I gave them the peanuts and sweetmeats that I had "brought with me," as Lieschen said. Then I began to unpack, and with great delight arranged my things in the neat little room that mamma gave me for my own. I found here just such a heavenly bed as I had at Aunt Ulrike's. My dear, good mamma surprised me with it, and over my bureau hung, a green wreath around it, Aunt Ulrike's picture. Oh! that was quite too good and kind! With tears of thankfulness and love I kissed the best of mothers, and under Aunt Ulrike's picture I at once hung to my two dear friends, Marie and nie. Now I had them all together. I nodded gaily to them every morning and evening, and sent to the dear ones the most tender greetings.

"In a room near mine slept Hannchen whose especial care ..."

cation my mother now entrusted to me. "I think you will find in the child a very apt pupil," said mamma. "It will be better for you to attend to your sister's studies, that you may not become careless in regard to your own. Now you can show us whether you learned anything at Aunt Ulrike's."

I rejoiced exceedingly at the trust and confidence that mamma placed in me in giving me the charge of Hannchen's education. During my stay with Aunt Ulrike I had often wished for it; for my gentle sister, who was far more clever and amiable than I had ever been, rose up before me with country manners and customs. At home it could not be otherwise. My pretty little sister should now have the benefit of all Aunt Ulrike had done for me. That was my sincere wish; and the love and confidence with which she met me, increased my desire to be of use to her. Besides that, I hoped by my help to lighten for my good mamma the cares of the household, and to take my little brothers and sisters, especially Lieschen, under my charge. Papa had shortly before engaged a tutor to instruct and discipline the boys, and Hannchen had also been under his instruction. Now I was to become his pupil, as he had begged to be allowed to assist me in languages and music. Of course I accepted his assistance with thanks. A quiet, beautiful, happy life now lay before me, full of joy and activity, in the circle of my loved ones, the memory of past days in Berlin gave this quiet life an additional charm. Warm correspondence bound me to distant friends. Auntie and Marie's long letters informing me of all that occurred in their circle. Eugenie came more seldom, for she disliked letter-writing, as I knew, and I was there-

fore all the more glad to receive her lively, roguish letters, which as well as the other signs of life from my loved ones, always gave me great pleasure. With what impatience I waited for the postman who brought our letters and newspapers three times a week from the next town! I often went far to meet him when I expected news from Aunt Ulrike or Marie, and the fulfilment of my hopes was my greatest joy.

But one day came very sad news that grieved me deeply. Aunt Ulrike had several times written that Eugenie's mother appeared to be very feeble. She had been obliged to give up her promised visit to Senftenburg Castle, and therefore Eugenie and the Baron had gone to visit her, Eugenie wishing to introduce to her her dear husband. The gay, worldly woman had greatly changed. True, she was still full of interest in the frivolities of life, but much more low-spirited than formerly. She longed so much for the company of sympathizing friends, that Eugenie could not find it in her heart to leave her. On receipt of this news Herr von Jagow returned at once to his wife, but arrived only in season to gladden the last hours of the sick one. A lingering fever that had now broken out in its full might, had set the bounds to her life; and what the woman in the full power and vigor of life had never known, the dying now experienced, full of bitter sorrow and repentance. Her last words to her husband were a prayer for forgiveness for the wrong she had done him, and her last look one of thankfulness for his true, undeserved affection.

So ended the life of one who had been so little able to spread happiness around her. Eugenie mourned sincerely for her mother, for she was much at-


tached to her in spite of her mistakes and weaknesses. She knew how to console her greatly depressed father, and spent the first sorrowful days at home with him. The love of his child was his most beautiful consolation for all the sorrows and deprivations that had so severely tried that noble man. He was for the time undecided in regard to his future; but I learned, through a letter of Eugenie's, that it was her father's sincere wish to have Aunt Ulrike make it her home with him, thus again rendering attractive his now solitary life, and by a quiet domesticity to sweeten his old age. I doubted not that Aunt Ulrike, who had always been attached by strong bonds of love to the only brother of her husband, would gratify his wish. Her life would also have a new significance

in so suitable a sphere of activity. But she would be obliged to leave Berlin, where she had lived for so long a time, for Herr von Jagow would return to his post at Braunschweig; but this noble, universally honored woman understood how to make a beautiful home for herself anywhere.

She made all about her happy, this best of women. Her whole life was a chain of sacrifices, and of proofs of love and attachment toward her fellow-creatures. Why should she not bring a blessing to the house that she chose for a home? Eugenie was happy in these plans and hopes, and I, too, for I fully realized how much all my interests were united with those of my dear friends in Berlin, after I had become separated from them.

XXII.

CONCLUSION.

 whole year had passed since my return to my father's house, when the sun one morning peeped with peculiar brightness in at the window of my little room in the gable. It was still very early; the cool autumn morning threw a whitish gray mist over the meadows, the light dew glistened on the variegated leaves that richly decked the garden path, and the wind brought single leaves up to my window where I sat quietly thinking, my glance straying far in the distance. Throughout the village quiet and sleep reigned; but above me in the stork's nest the old ones flapped their noisy greeting to their little company,

and soon began to instruct them in flying; for the time of their departure was near, and woe to the stork that cannot endure the long flight across the wide sea! He would be quickly killed by his companions, being troublesome to them on their journey. Far above the houses of the village they floated at their white plumage glancing in sunshine. Now the morning son the lark fell upon my ear, as it passed high above in the blue ether and at the same time a flock of tridges fluttered out from among yellow cornstalks,

Peace and quiet which rested

God's beautiful world also filled my soul, and with thankful, joyful heart I looked above to the Father, and asked his future love and blessing, which in the new life now lying before me I should doubly need. Then I felt two arms about my neck, and two clear, soft blue eyes looked lovingly into mine.

"Good morning, my Grete; God bless you," said a sweet voice, and soft lips were pressed upon mine.

"What! are you already awake, Marie," cried I with surprise, looking into my friend's fresh, rosy face, for it was she who greeted me—my own precious Marie.

"I could no longer remain quietly in the feathers," replied she cheerfully. "Joy robs one of sleep just as sorrow does. Besides, it is well that I rose early, we have very much to do to-day. I will wake little Hannchen, and plunder the garden with her. There are not many flowers, but the autumn has still spared us something. In case of necessity we can use gay colored leaves for our garlands."

Soon I saw the two pretty blondes, Marie and sister Hannchen, in their pretty morning dresses glide into the garden, and like bees passing from flower to flower, they disappeared behind the trees. All was now life and activity. The measured stroke of the thresher resounded on all sides, dogs barked, little children tripped half dressed to the open doors, windows were opened, light smoke rose from the chimneys, noises were heard far and near, the early bells rang. I could not longer in my room. I was about to find the young girls in the garden when the window below me opened, and a girl's joyous voice reached my ear. Like an arrow I darted down stairs to the voice. At the open window stood a

pretty nurse in a many-colored costume dancing in her arms a beautiful boy of only a few months. Crowing, he stretched his little arms toward me from his little white, embroidered night dress. I scrambled up to the window, kissed the angelic child, and allowed my glance to stray into the room. In the background a beautiful young wife still lay in bed, and nodded gaily to me. "Good morning, Eugenie, you little lazy-bones," cried I in greeting. "Your son does not follow your example; he is awake early."

"Dear heaven knows that!" replied the young wife, yawning and stretching. "The little torment wakes with the sun, like a genuine peasant child."

"That is because he is in the house with your Daisy, the country girl," laughed I nodding. "Fine beginning that for a young baron!"

"An abominable fellow! a true girl in boy's clothes!" cried Eugenie. "And his papa is as fond of him as I never saw a man in my life. I only wonder that he can stay away from him for a whole week. It was of no consequence if I came away. It was, 'You owe it to Gretchen, since you have promised it to her. I will come myself as soon as I have made the necessary arrangements; it shall be but a short separation,' &c. But the boy—that he should be separated from him was a misfortune! It is enough to make one run away to have such a bear of a husband!"

"Well, you have run away from him," said I amused, and raised myself up on the window-sill to play with the boy. Eugenie had risen in the meantime, and now came to us; and the proud mother-love with which she took her boy in her arms could not possibly be exceeded by the father's tenderness, much as the young wife scolded about the father's pride. It was a charming picture—th

beautiful mother with the blooming boy in her arms, both in their white night-clothing, and near them the pretty nurse in her strange costume, the sunlight falling upon them from between the green branches of an acacia tree.

We did not remain long alone. Soon the door opened and my young brothers and sisters, the "Rebels of Korah" as Eugenie called them, came running out. I sprang down from my window seat, which was well, for they would have pulled me down, they ran at me so.

"New cake! Gretchen, new cake! Come quickly!" cried they excitedly.

"Six large pound cakes, ten sugar cakes with raisins, eight plum cakes, and a lot more! Only come! you can see them all in the storeroom."

"And the gardener is picking the last bunches of grapes from the vines, and we are going to shake the plum and pear trees, and Kathrine has killed the fattest turkey, and Herr Reier and the coachman are putting up the fireworks in the garden, and we are going to hang the magic lanterns on the trees!" they cried so fast that one could hardly speak a word distinctly. They would take no refusal; I must go with them and see everything of which they had told me. Now they led me to the fruit trees in the garden, now to the hens and pigeons in the yard; here I must taste the sweet clusters of grapes that the gardener reached me, there inhale the scent of the fresh cakes which were piled up in large numbers. Everywhere was bustle and confusion, and everywhere the active children buzzed about, of course in every one's way, and ran from one to another to ask if they could help.

"Come, we will help Marie make wreaths," said I at last, in order to free mamma from the troublesome little band. Gaily we all went to the arbor

in the flower-garden, where we found the two girls busy in the midst of many colored leaves and flowers. As soon as they saw me they ran gaily toward me, and Marie put a lovely wreath of little red asters on my head, much as I struggled to prevent it. "There were not enough red ones, so we were obliged to put others with them in order to crown you," said she kissing me. "You are queen of the feast and must wear a crown, that all the world may know you and do you homage."

"But to-morrow will be the great day; I must not wear a crown to-day," cried I, blushing with joy.

"No, no; to-morrow no such common flowers will do; then we girls must twine hallowed green in this black hair," said Marie again embracing me. "O my Grete," continued she tenderly, "how glad I am that I can spend this day with you!"

Tears came into my eyes as I pressed my friend to my heart.

"Good morning, ladies," said now a rich, manly voice near us, and looking up we saw our friend and neighbor the young Pastor Baumhard standing by our side. Heartily glad, I gave him my hand, and talking merrily we three walked about for a while in the garden. But I was soon called, and left Marie and our guest to await my return. I was detained longer than I thought, and did not expect to meet the Pastor again, but as I passed through one of the linden walks I found the two sitting near other on a bench, Marie's dear deeply dyed with red, and the Pastor with happily beaming eyes. A single word of our friend told me all. I had long noticed the growing love of the two, and to-day, on the eve of my wedding day, Marie had engaged herself to the good man.

"But please, Fraulein Gretchen, remain silent till to-morrow," begged the Pastor. "I would rather not have made my declaration to my dear Marie till after that, but I could not wait longer, be longer in suspense, especially to-morrow when I shall perform the marriage ceremony for Marie's best friend. But now that I have the certainty of my own happiness, I am peaceful and content. To-morrow, after I have blessed your union, my dear friend, the world may hear of our bond."

The dearest wish of my heart was fulfilled—that Marie might become the wife of this man whom we had all so greatly honored since he two years ago became our pastor. Marie loved him from the first—that I knew—and her love increased with every hour of her stay with us, for Pastor Baunhard was our daily guest, our most trusted friend. But week after week passed away, Marie had been nearly two months with us, and still there was no engagement, although the Pastor showed great preference for her. She remained shy and reserved toward him; I could not understand her; and so it had been with him, until this had finally broken open the door of her heart, giving him an insight into his future happiness. Now all was well, and I could quietly await the morrow.

Yes, my dear friends, it was really my wedding day for which all these preparations were being made. For nearly a year had the backfischchen been a happy bride, and now stood at the goal her hopes and wishes; but who was the bridegroom? Did you not long ago ask? Perhaps you thought of it never than I did, as you read the preceding pages. Ah! my young heart long concealed in itself feelings directing toward this end, but which I so

little understood that I did not at all know what ailed me after my return to my father's house. That inexpressible longing for all that was connected with Berlin, that morbid desire for news from there, the constant distaste for all that I did, pained me immeasurably. Was I not very unthankful for all that surrounded me in my father's house, and with which I was so dissatisfied? I constantly and bitterly reproached myself for it, and engaged more zealously in all kinds of work to drive away my thoughts; studied French and English with Hannchen, music with Herr Reier, helped mamma in the household arrangements, played with my little brothers and sisters, like a child myself—it was all to no purpose. I always again surprised myself in sad, troubled broodings, and all pleasure and joy appeared to wish to fly from me.

So passed the first two months after my return home. But one day came a letter to me—a letter from a friend in Berlin—and a few days later the writer himself. Suddenly all was changed; the scales fell from my eyes, and I knew what my eager longing betokened. The troubled heavens about me were red with the brightness of early dawn; the sun of happiness and unanticipated joy rose upon my young life. I was a bride; the bride of the man who to me was far more than all other men whom I had ever seen; who now told me that he had loved me since the moment when I approached him with such unconstrained childishness, and had since then had no other wish than to win me. Oh! what a nameless happiness I now found in my father's house!

And now the day had arrived on which I should be united to him, and for me there was no greater happiness in the world. All my friends had prom-

ised to come to my wedding. Marie had already been with us for weeks, her parents and Eduard were expected, Eugenie had come with her lovely little son to participate in my joy, her husband, her father, and above all Aunt Ulrike, were expected to-day and who was missing?

The carriage rolled through the village, the dogs barked, the village children rejoiced, and the coachman announced their arrival by cracking his whip. What life there was under the lindens before the house! Papa and mamma flew to embrace Aunt Ulrike, Marie ran from one to another, Eugenie sank now in the large traveling cloak of her father, now in the arms of the Baron, who embraced at once, wife, child, and nurse; then springing about behaved like a mad boy, in spite of his still somewhat stiff foot. And I? I knew of all this only from hearsay, for I saw only two blue eyes in which was all of heaven to me, and was so closely held in two arms that I could neither see nor hear anything of the outside world. How? Were there again gipsies near, that I clung so closely to that breast?

"Uncle Hansmann, Lieschen wants to say, 'how do you do,'" we now heard near us, and my little sister pressed her brown curly head against the knee of him who seemed unwilling ever to release me again.

"Good morning, my dear little sister-in-law," replied the accosted, joyfully, releasing me and taking Lieschen up. Then the boys came to greet the new brother-in-law of whom they were very proud. Father and mother warmly embraced their son-in-law, and I found hardly words and looks enough to greet the many dear friends who brought me so sincere well-wishes.

Our dear old house was certainly

much changed by all these strangers whom it must receive within its walls; but how proud and stately it looked through the linden trees, as if it could appreciate the honor done it, and the stork on the gable flapped a loud welcome. From all sides came our relatives, friends and neighbors to join in the festivities, and in the shady walks of the park, as in house and yard, talked gaily with each other. A glorious, warm autumn day allowed us to remain out of doors; so papa had tables spread under the lindens for all who could not find room in the house. It was a happy day, and joy and pleasure filled all hearts. But I was the happiest of all; and if my lips could not express the joy with which my heart was filled, it was certainly plainly written in my eyes, for those eyes saw one—the beloved of my soul—Theodor Hausmann.

In the evening we had beautiful fire works, that Herr Reier had put up in the garden. The closing piece was a most pleasing transparency, representing different scenes from my life in Berlin, and whose originator was the wicked Eugenie. Small scenes were arranged about the centre. There were represented the backfischchen's first journey, giving only a heap of satchels, packages and cushions, above which appeared a girl's head; then the backfischchen in the greatest distress—the visit at Frau Geheimrathin Delius', in which I appeared opposite Amanda with tucked up, dripping umbrella and sogged gloves, hanging on the edge of a chair, large drops rolling from my head, and rain from the umbrella to floor. Then the street scene, in which I embraced Marie, and near us standandy, lovingly stretching hand toward us. Then back

meeting with her friend, our familiar conversation in that large company, we watched by all who stood near us, Aunt Ulrike in the background tearing her hair in despair. Of course, too, backfischehen in a ball fever, just as she is about to crawl into Aunt Ulrike's pocket, then the presentation of the cotillion order to the "friend"—all was represented. So it went on. Numberless little painful moments that I had passed during my stay in Berlin the wicked Eugenie brought back in ludicrous representation; and Eduard, as an itinerant ballad singer, announced to the audience in excellent rhyme the wonderful histories of those pictures. But the chief of all was the middle one entitled, "Satan's Masterpiece; a Dreadful Death-scene; a Warning to all Backfischehen." A troop of wild little devils dressed as gipsies plunged forward from the thicket, swinging clubs, sticks and other weapons at a young girl. With outstretched arms she flew toward a form that floated down to her from a cloud, with wings and a crown, as angels are represented, but whose cloven feet and ram's horns betokened nothing less than an angel. He was dressed like Theodor Hausmann, and stretched his arms toward the fleeing one to conduct her into his kingdom, from which flames burst forth behind him. The accompanying song ended as follows:—

And now, my dear maidens, I've shown you
what pranks

Old Satan will play.

At uetfish seventeen wander not near the
banks

Of the Ribsee, I pray,

Els ill yours be the fate of our backfisch-
chen; yea,

Yo urely be lost forever and aye.

may well suppose that those lu-
dic pictures occasioned the greatest
me ment; and I could not for a mo-

ment be angry with Eugenie, badly as she had treated me. I was astonished that she knew so many little incidents in which she had had no part, especially the closing scenes; but she had been a sly rogue ever since I had known her, and remained so her life long, although she had now become a most exemplary wife and mother; and the best heart shone forth from her roguish eyes, as I was to learn on this never-to-be-forgotten day. Her roguishness had excited our worthy Aunt Ulrike to join her in making me a wedding present as comical as costly, which Eugenie handed to me with a very roguish face. Auntie's present was very appropriate for a "backfischehen," as she said—a very beautiful bracelet in the form of a fish biting its tail, its eyes two costly diamonds. Eugenie also brought me my "likeness," as she declared, namely a "daisy." It was a costly brooch, of course in the form of a large daisy, the petals of clear brilliants resting upon golden leaves.

To this present, quite as tasteful as valuable, was added some beautiful handwork—a pair of just such bright blue slippers as she had put on on her arrival at Aunt Ulrike's, and which had caused me so much vexation. Besides those and countless other valuable presents, I will mention but one—a tasteful cushion on which my gentle Marie had embroidered a wreath of blue forget-me-nots, and which served as a support for the blooming myrtle wreath which she brought me.

How happy were the hours on the following day during which that green wreath adorned my forehead! That I cannot tell you. My heart was so full of joy and thanks for the unutterable happiness that God had given me, for all the love that beautified my life, that

I had little thought or care for the outside things and remaining festivities of the day. It was, as you may believe, a real country wedding; and what that means, what a profusion of flowers, of lights in house and church, what numbers of villagers in holiday attire, bell-ringing and such demonstrations, what an abundance of cake and wine and holiday viands, and last what a merry dance under our lindens, joined in by old and young from the whole village, only those know and can appreciate who have once participated in it.

The announcement of the joyful news, the betrothal of Pastor Baumhard and my best Marie, which was another event of the day, occasioned boundless joy; for bridegroom and bride were, by all who knew them, honored and beloved as few are. This bond added much to our happiness, and only joyous, harmo-

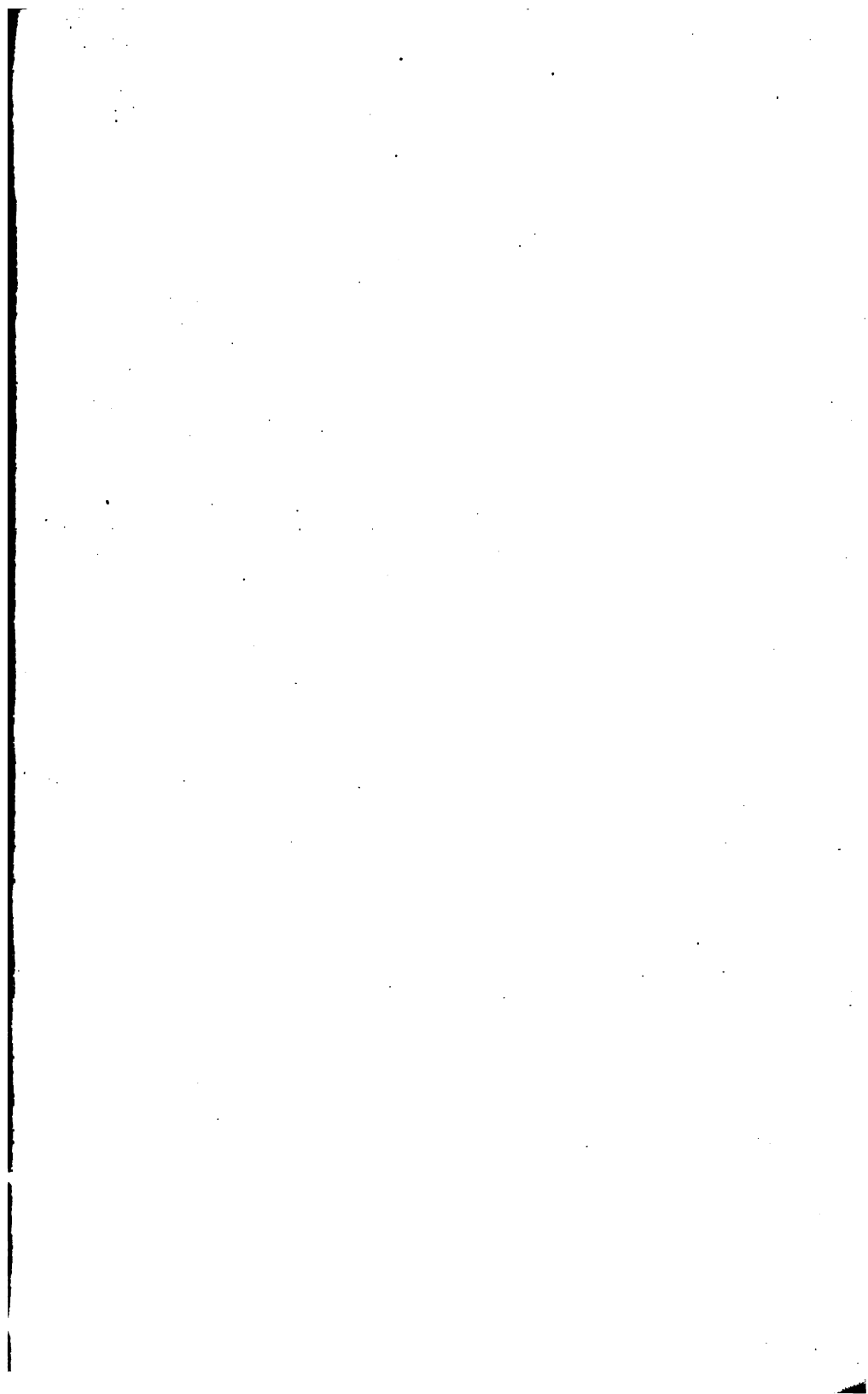
nious tones sounded in the hearts of all present.

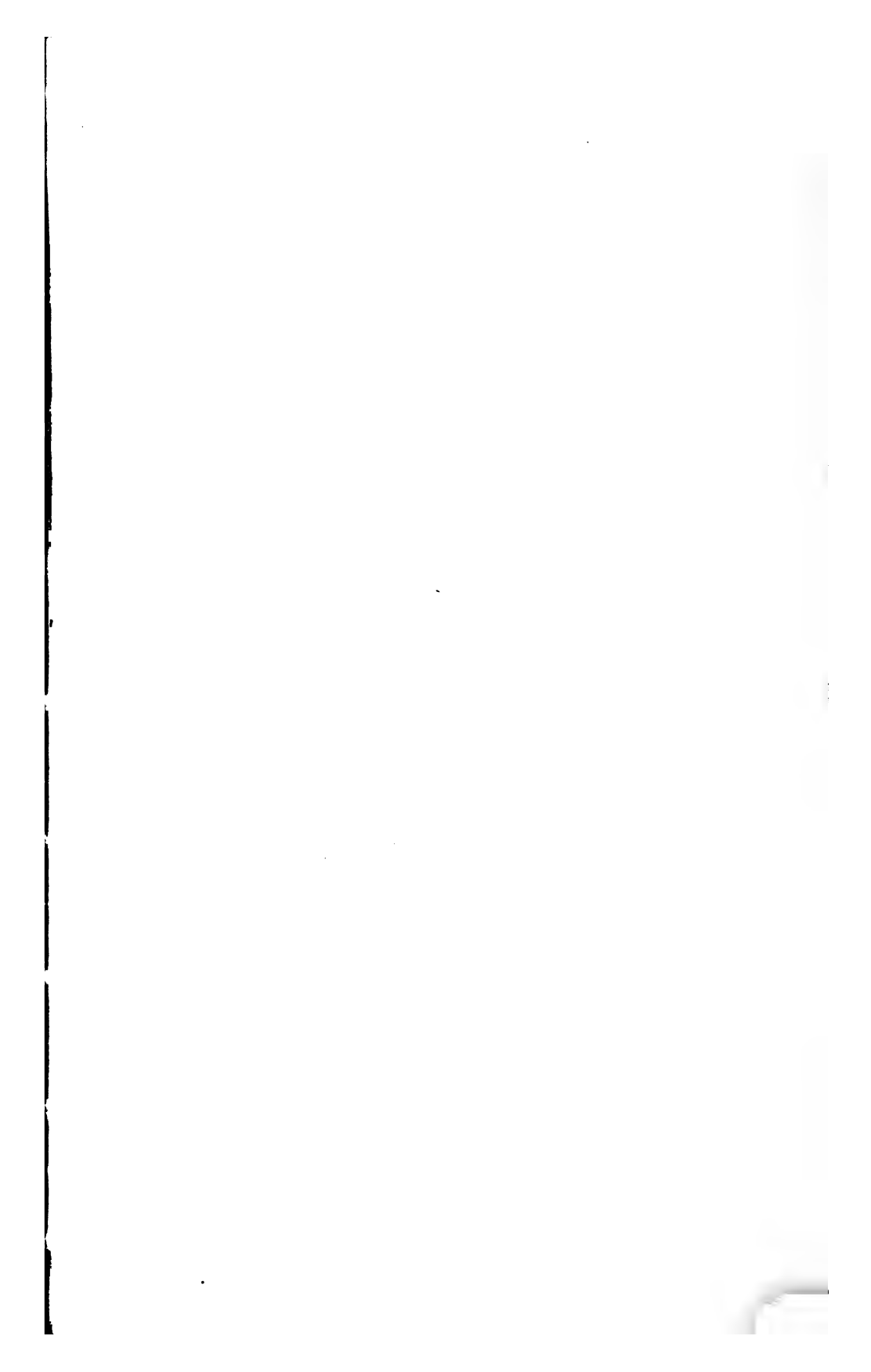
With the blessings of all my loved ones I went, joy and sadness mingled in my heart, on the same day, by the side of my husband, from my beloved father's house to another home. Theodor had been appointed consul for the government at Braunschweig, where Eugenie's father was. Near my Aunt Ulrike, who now lived in the house of her brother-in-law, dawned for me the most perfect happiness that a wife can enjoy.

So I take my leave of you, my dear friends, who have so kindly followed me through the sad and happy days of my youth. May each of you enjoy as much happiness as the good God bestowed upon me. May you also one day be able to look back to the season of your youth as thankfully and joyfully as I can to mine.



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